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The Shape of Things

REPORTS FROM THE SPANISH FRONT DURING the past week indicate that the government forces have recovered almost completely from their disastrous setback in Aragon. Aided by overwhelming aerial supremacy, the rebels have continued to pound away, first toward Tortosa, then toward Castellon, and later in the Teruel sector. But as Louis Fischer points out in his cabled dispatch this week, the main drive into Catalonia has been checked, and the Madrid front, though weakened by the withdrawal of thousands of crack troops, is still intact. It is evident that the Loyalist forces have received some aid from abroad, though it has been but a fraction of that supplied to the rebels. If the government could be given free opportunity to utilize its large gold reserves for the purchase of supplies, it would still have an excellent chance of victory. Unfortunately, the pressure on President Roosevelt has not yet been sufficient to induce him to lift the embargo on supplies from this country. Despite the earnest plea of Senator Nye, who was personally largely responsible for the embargo, the President has intimated that he is not disposed to take action. He will only be moved from this position, we suspect, by an overwhelming protest from the millions of our people who must realize by now that the fate of the Spanish democracy is ultimately linked with that of democracy everywhere.

KONRAD HENLEIN'S DEMAND THAT THE Czech government revise its basic foreign and domestic policy to accommodate Hitler's *Drang nach Osten* has precipitated a crisis sooner than anyone anticipated. The possibility of a peaceful settlement seems slight. Those who talk of transforming the Czechoslovak Republic into a federation of cantons on the Swiss model betray an ignorance of geographical realities. Contrary to the general impression in this country, the German-speaking inhabitants of Czechoslovakia do not live in one compact territorial region. On the contrary, the German districts are separated by districts in which Czechs predominate. The largest German area has only about 800,000 German-speaking inhabitants, and a federal system would necessitate at least eight separate German-speaking cantons, some of them very small. This, of course, would be wholly unsatisfactory to the Sudeten Nazis. Henlein proposes instead a "corporative auton-

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omy" for the national minorities. Under this plan all Germans in Czechoslovakia would be enrolled in a German "corporation," subject to the orders and laws imposed by a German Führer. Such a situation would, of course, be incompatible with Czechoslovak sovereignty, as indeed it is intended to be. Henlein's open declaration of allegiance to Nazi doctrine makes the possibility of compromise extremely remote.

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE TO CONGRESS asking an end of tax exemption for government securities and the salaries of state and federal officials is a fine example of courage and statesmanship. The stupid inequality of these exemptions has been obvious for years, but no one has done anything about it. The opposition of powerful persons in the upper-bracket income class who have found a tax refuge in government securities and the political power of five million government employees whose salaries are exempt have been on the side of inaction. The dead hand of early Supreme Court decisions has also restrained change. These held that under a federal form of government it would be dangerous to allow either the states or the central government to tax each other's officers, levies, or instrumentalities. The President's message cuts through all these reasons. To allow the rich to escape taxation, he says, is to violate the principle of progressive taxation. Mr. Roosevelt denies that only through an amendment can the constitutional obstacles to the abolition of these exemptions be removed. He points out, as we did also in our issue of March 19, that the trend of the Supreme Court's recent tax decisions is to redefine the entire theory of tax immunity. After the President's partial victory in the tax bill in the retention of the principle of the undistributed-profits tax, this new message should further strengthen the Administration in a field which until recently promised something close to complete demoralization.

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THE LA FOLLETTE COMMITTEE HAS BECOME the relentless conscience of an imperfect democracy. In unfolding the truth about the Chicago massacre, the Tampa Klan outrages, and a host of other individual crimes, as well as in bringing to light the more systematic and continuous terrorism invoked by employers' associations, the committee has performed an incalculable service. Naturally the National Association of Manufacturers disagrees on this point and so do many respectable newspapers which have skilfully blurred the committee's exposure of the N. A. M. Only a $60,000 appropriation is needed to continue the life of the committee. A powerful undercover campaign is now on foot to block this appropriation and to make the country forget the findings of this body. Neither objective should be tolerated. The committee's job is not done, and the reactionaries know it. In Harlan four miners are finishing their seventh year in jail for defending themselves against armed mine guards. In Jersey City, James Burkitt, one of Mayor Hague's most fearless critics, has just received an outrageous six months' sentence for "uttering offensive language in a public place," a euphemism for an anti-Hague speech. America is full of such dark corners, and they need courageous exposure, the kind of exposure which is an indispensable corrective in a democratic society.

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WE PRINT IN THIS ISSUE AN ARTICLE BY Eliot Janeway giving some facts about RFC loans to railroads that have long needed airing. The article clears away effectively the myth that the Administration can afford to coast along on the plane of its present policy, ignoring the need of far-reaching changes. Next week we shall print an extended editorial statement on what appears to be ahead for the railroads. We are in accord with Governor La Follette's statement that an energetic government would cut through the red tape of vested interests, and set men and money to work on the railroads. It is not the meaning of Mr. Janeway's article that RFC loans should be stopped. What is needed is more help for the railroads, not less. But that help is wasted so long as it is given to roads whose capital structures, freight systems, and operating expenses remain as they are. We do not want subsidies for bankers and bond-holders: we want to use federal money in ways that will improve the physical properties of the nation and increase the national income.

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EAMON DE VALERA WON THE GREATEST victory of his tempestuous political career in the treaty just concluded between Ireland and Great Britain. The terms are not released in full, but it is already clear that the Irish Prime Minister has won everything of consequence that he has been fighting for in recent years with the exception of unity between the north and south of Ireland. Britain has waived its claim to the land annuities, the chief source of controversy between the two countries. The British retaliatory duties on Irish cattle, bacon, and other farm products, which wrought havoc with Irish agriculture, are to be withdrawn. The ports of Cobh, Bere Haven, and Lough Swilly, which are of considerable importance as naval bases, are to be restored to Irish sovereignty. In return De Valera has made substantial, but not ruinous, concessions in the new Irish tariff on manufactured goods, and has apparently made certain promises with respect to cooperation with Britain's national-defense program. It is possible that the new treaty, which brings to a close six years of bitter economic war between Ireland and Britain, may be an opening wedge for the fulfilment of De Valera's final ambition—a united, free Ireland. This possibility is heightened by the unexpected nomination of Dr. Douglas Hyde, a Protestant, for the Presidency by both the Fianna Fail and the Fine Gael. The choice of the seventy-eight-year-old Dr. Hyde, long revered as poet, historian, and university professor, should help to break down the antagonism of Protestant Ulster. While sentiment in northern Ireland is still strongly against union, it need not permanently remain so.

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WITH GRIM AND PATHETIC DETERMINATION, the Scandinavian countries have finally entered the armaments race. The decision suggests an effort to combat air raids with a collection of umbrellas. But it is a measure of the fright and desperation which must grip small nations while Mr. Chamberlain cynically offers them to the most belligerent bidder. The first gun in the campaign was fired by Prime Minister Hanssen of Sweden, whose call for an extraordinary defense budget was enthusiastically received. In appropriations for fuel storage, air defense, and military equipment, Sweden is now spending $75,000,000 a year in a solemn effort to appear invulnerable. Even more significant is the spurt in arms appropriations in Norway, where anti-militarism has been a national tradition. The Socialist government has proposed a defense program that exceeds the most ardent hopes of the conservatives. Calling for a $13,000,000 emergency appropriation, it will double the customary allocation for defense. Finland is reported to be contemplating similar measures, with Labor Cabinet members ardently espousing the move. And the London *Times* reports that the Danish Finance Minister has called for an $11,000,000 internal loan for defense equipment and the establishment of internal economic reserves. Undoubtedly these measures reflect Nazi encroachments in North Schleswig as well as the general paralysis of collective machinery. All of these sums, which loom so large in Scandinavian economy, are grotesquely small in the billion-dollar language of world armaments. They serve only to symbolize the tragedy of peaceful nations in an era of fascist aggression and democratic hypnosis.

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CHARGES AND COUNTER-CHARGES FILLED the air as the last Utopia crashed to earth. Perhaps it was too much to expect that that great experiment, the Dionne quintuplex, could be kept free of factional squabbles; $600,000 in one county (including cereal rights and movie contracts) was bound to get involved in the machinations of the status quo. Papa Dionne is accusing Dr. Dafoe of mishandling the Quins' money; and Dr. Dafoe, who is said to be hopping mad, asserts that "outside forces" are using Papa Dionne in an effort to overthrow the doctor's regime and get control of the children's money. Following his statement, six assorted diplomatic representatives are said to have left town. Dr. Dafoe says the row started when a nurse and a teacher in the Dionne bureaucracy were discharged because they had "caused trouble." They leagued themselves with Papa Dionne, who thereupon filed a petition asking a judicial investigation, although the good doctor had already asked the Governor General to order an inquiry, which has just been completed. The struggle for power in Callander, Ontario, is bound to have far-reaching results. No one denies that Dr. Dafoe saved the infant quintuplex in its crucial first hours, and there is circumstantial evidence that Papa Dionne at the time did nothing but stand around. On the other hand, Papa's claim that he was responsible for the whole experiment cannot be gainsaid. Mama Dionne has made no statement. The episode has brought into question the whole concept of the dictatorship of the infantariat, and the Canadian soul is under suspicion. But so far those Old Bolsheviks, Marie, Cecile, Yvonne, Annette, and Emilie, have not confessed.

Number One Obsession

THE President invites Henry Ford to the White House and sets the whole press corps to speculating. The President makes a statement about taxes, and Wall Street sees red. The President appears before the Daughters of the American Revolution and reminds them that "you and I are descended from immigrants and revolutionists"—and everyone puzzles over what such a factual statement implies for our economic future. What the President says or fails to say, whom the President sees or doesn't see, every defeat or victory for one of the President's proposals, and every fall or rise in his prestige becomes a barometer according to which stock prices move and "business confidence" sags or rallies. The bitterness of his enemies, the march of events, and his own flair for the spotlight have conspired to make of Mr. Roosevelt the country's number one obsession.

This is not a healthy situation. American government has from the start tended to focus on the Executive, despite the checks placed on his power. And in periods of national crisis this tendency has of course been accentuated. The result has been that our political discussion, even when it has centered on economic issues, has had first to be translated into terms of Presidential personalities; this despite the fact that real progress in government comes from executive grasp of problems, legislative discussion of them, and administrative sweat in dealing with them, and not from the nation-wide conjugation of the moods of an individual.

We hear much today about the healthy state of revolt that Congress is in. But to interpret the health of the polity in terms of the deadlock of tax legislation, the sabotage of the wage-hour law, the wiping out of efforts toward a sane reorganization of government bureaus is a curiously negative conception. The real health of a polity lies in affirmative government action, critically considered. Yet the outstanding fact about the Congressional revolt is that there is nothing affirmative in it. Neither the Republicans nor the tory Democrats have advanced the slightest item in an affirmative program. Their intent, despite all the nobility of purpose with which they have tried to surround themselves, is to destroy the New Deal program by an attack on the President's personality and motives.

Never in our history has an attack been so bitter, with the exception of that which led to the impeachment proceedings against President Andrew Johnson after the Civil War. Most of it has been underground. No newspaper or journal would dare put into cold print even a

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hint of the charges about Mr. Roosevelt's mind and outlook which furnish the intellectual repast at the tables of the rich and influential. The crumbs of this feast are handed down to the middle class, which apes its superiors in the social scale. What the newspapers dare to carry is read in the context of this slanderous gossip, and it gives a weirdly distorted meaning to the charges of irresponsibility and lust for dictatorial power that the press does print. The result is that there can be no serious discussion of basic issues like a program for meeting the depression or expanding the national income or dealing with the war danger; and even the progressives who care much more about these issues than they do about the President are forced into the false position of defending him against the unfair tactics of his opponents.

There is no wisdom in such a course even for the opposition and no benefit for the country as a whole. The concentration on personalities is a fantastic policy for an opposition to follow when it has a heaven-sent depression to capitalize on. We are, of course, not greatly disturbed by the waste of tory political energy. What concerns us much more is that the obsession with the President creates an intellectual climate in which neither the left nor the right can carry on intelligent discussion of issues. And what concerns us further is that all the business processes of the country—saving and investment, the turnover of securities, the accumulation of inventories, the closing or expansion of factories—are now geared to political moods rather than to basic economic trends. The exchange and investment markets have become political in their entire orientation; and these processes, on which, under capitalism, the processes of production are dependent, run in terms of how men in Wall Street happen to feel about the President on some particular morning.

The barrage of invective has had its effect on Mr. Roosevelt as well. Every President is necessarily more or less isolated physically from the country as a whole. He cannot make frequent observations for himself but must base his guesses about public sentiment on the chance sampling of his visitors and on newspaper accounts. There are signs, however, that the President is feeling psychologically isolated as well, and that he is losing some of his best qualities of drive and initiative. If it went farther this would be a great loss, for even the best economic program needs a confident leadership to push it through. One of the most hopeful signs on the political horizon is the fact that many of our Congressmen are now beginning to get the backfire from the defeat of the reorganization bill. The "people back home" who write but do not telegraph are making themselves heard in no uncertain terms. They are writing in to say that hysteria over the false issue of personal dictatorship has been allowed to obscure the real issue of government efficiency. We feel certain that if the common people were allowed to speak, this would be their attitude about such everyday but all-important matters as wages and jobs. It is time to get away from trumped-up personal charges and phony "principles," and to get down to how America is going to survive economically.

La Follette Thunder

THE La Follettes are gathering their clans. If the recent speeches and statements of Governor "Phil" and Senator "Bob" do not point to a break with Mr. Roosevelt and the starting of a La Follette boom for 1940, then the language of politics has lost its meaning. Though the La Follettes and the President have hitherto been comrades in arms, this latest move should not occasion any sharp surprise. The Democratic tories are talking political realignment; the Republicans are seeking to seduce them into at least a companionate marriage; it is inevitable therefore that there should be talk of a new progressive alignment. The storms are gathering over Mr. Roosevelt. If there is to be so much thunder on the right, the La Follettes are in effect saying, why not some thunder on the left as well?

The two La Follettes have for some months been traveling about, talking with labor, business, and farm leaders, holding conferences, laying plans. As we go to press, the Governor is preparing for a public meeting at Madison on April 28 at which he will divulge almost all. Thus far he has said nothing that would make a program. His sequence of four radio speeches has been as pointed politically and as circumspect economically as any traditional gesture of throwing the hat into the ring. The first speech, on his success in reorganizing Wisconsin's bureaus and commissions, carried the implication that he had succeeded where the President in his reorganization fight had failed. The second speech, which attacked the President's "tinkering and patching" in the face of the depression, came close to discussing but finally avoided the "fundamental underlying problems" which the President had failed to meet. The third speech, a criticism of the WPA program, discussed the self-liquidating works program which the Governor had failed to get through the state legislature. The final speech lumped the "do-nothing policies" of Hoover and Roosevelt, and showed what a do-something policy would include by outlining briefly a plan for breaking the railroad log-jam. In short, while the Governor attacked the President at his most vulnerable points, he did so without differing essentially from the premises of the New Deal.

Such an attack would seem to be the function not of a party in process of formation but of an opposition group within a party or allied to it on the left. *The Nation* has consistently made some of the same criticisms of the President when he has shown himself weak and compromising. But to lump the Roosevelt policies with those of Hoover is grossly unfair, unhistorical, and from a progressive standpoint strategically inept. With the President on the offensive, taking a definitely progressive stand on taxes, on the wage-hour bill, on the relief program, on a spending program, on monopoly, on an anti-fascist policy, one may raise the question whether the move for a new party alignment is wisely timed. The same question may be raised about Mayor LaGuardia's choice of this moment to don a ten-gallon hat in Oklahoma, talk

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of Western virtues, smear on war-paint with the other Indians, and place himself at the head of the new barbarians who will lead the Republicans toward socialism.

These moves, especially that of the La Follettes, can be variously interpreted. They may indicate a third-party bid and a three-cornered contest in 1940, which is unlikely and would be futile, for while Democrats and Progressives were assassinating each other, the Republicans would walk into the White House. They may be a way of exerting pressure on the President to energize his program. They may be—and the President can so use them—a way of serving notice on the tory Democrats that if they push their party too far out of line with mass needs and demands, the parade will pass them by. Or, what is most likely, they may proceed from a conviction that Roosevelt has lost the leadership, that events are moving toward a tory coalition in the two major parties, and that only a new and vigorous leadership can reorganize the progressives into a second—instead of a third—party.

Not since 1912 has national politics been in greater flux. Progressives must move with circumspection. The La Follette tradition in American life is a brilliant and honorable one. It has been the foe of corporate power, the foe of imperialism, the friend of labor and the farmer. It has shown itself realistic in strategy and adept at progressive machine politics. One disturbing thing is that both the La Follettes have shown a somewhat provincial attitude toward foreign affairs. But even more disturbing is the fact that Governor La Follette, at least in his radio speeches, stayed sedulously away from reform and talked only of recovery, and gave no indication of a genuine farmer-labor base for his program. All this political maneuvering is without much meaning until we know where the American labor movement will stand in the new alignment. Thus far, while both Mr. Lewis and Mr. Green have had their disagreements with the President, labor has not spoken.

The progressive policy today must be one of watchful waiting. The progressive cause and the American future are not to be identified with the political fortunes of any dynasty, whether it be the patrician Roosevelts or the fighting La Follettes. Whoever aspires to lead the progressives must earn that leadership by his concern for the interests of the vast American majority and by proof that he can unite the best resources of that majority.

Imported Nazi Sadism

THE province of Yorkville centers around Eighty-sixth Street in New York, and we cannot envisage Hitler's early arrival by subway to annex it for the greater Reich. But the violent and provocative behavior of American Nazis must be faced if we are to avert a siege of disorder in which the procedures of democracy may be seriously undermined. Last week's Yorkville riot, growing out of a Nazi rally at which several legionnaires were beaten up, was an indication of the urgency as well as the complexity of the issue. It is probable that visiting legionnaires were trying to disrupt the rally—a practice at which they are notoriously adept. The Nazis are apparently prepared to use gangster tactics in a determined effort to prove that they are as tough as the bigger boys in Berlin. For if the precise circumstances of the Yorkville incident are still in doubt, the brutal attack on Charles Weiss, crippled editor of an anti-Nazi magazine, was despicably simple: a group of Nazis invaded his office and inflicted the tortures which are conventional Nazi practice in Germany. This attack was pitiless and premeditated—a sickening illustration of the Nazi mentality both in its ferocity and in the helplessness of the chosen victim. It suggested with ugly realism the youth of European fascism, when the sadistic violence of street-corner bullies became, in the absence of effective restraints, the language of political conversation.

The problem presented is one for which we are unprepared, even while fascist growths are steadily nourished by such events. The Nazis are uniformed. They have camps. They drill in regular military formations. They are armed—and if they use knives and blackjacks today, there is every reason to believe that they have more militant aspirations for tomorrow. Unable to make any decisive headway in enlisting American opinion, they are nevertheless determined to dispel any rumors that they have been infected by the poison of liberalism.

How can such avowedly anti-democratic activities be curbed without encroaching upon the vitality of democracy, without jeopardizing the civil rights of every group and individual? The answer is not simple, but certain principles are becoming more clearly defined. We must continue to tolerate the Nazis' meetings, rallies, and parades. They should be permitted to expostulate until the beer mugs are dry. But we see no reason why we should tolerate any uniformed bands which have frankly political purposes. It is even more unthinkable that such groups should possess arms, whether blackjacks or machine-guns. They should not be permitted to conduct military drills. Such restrictions offer the community a minimum basis of self-defense, and should be embodied in laws specifically drawn to avert the threat of fascist violence.

The dangers inherent in such legislation are many. Several of them were pointed out in an article on the British Public Order Act by Lucille Milner, published in *The Nation* of January 15. Discrimination, unfairness, and laxity in its enforcement were charged. Yet, as a correspondent points out in this issue, the act delivered a serious blow to British fascism. The English experience ought to make us doubly cautious in drafting new laws. Many questions will require thoughtful consideration. For example: Is federal intervention possible under the Constitution? To what extent can the line be drawn between political and non-political uniforms? Do existing laws control adequately the possession of arms? Britain's experience should not discourage us from seeking to meet the problem while such movements are still incipient. Our domestic fascists must be made to understand that the blessings of liberty do not include a passkey to the houses of defenseless people.

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Republicans, Neutrality—and Azaleas

BY PAUL Y. ANDERSON

Washington, April 25

MOST of the news around here is political, and not all fit to print. Of that which is, item one is the decision of the Republicans to reenter national politics, a field which they abandoned in November, 1936, as being unprofitable and having no future. Since the first step in the routine is to get a press agent, they hired Franklyn Waltman, a plump and pleasantly aggressive young man whose incredible energy and high disdain of English syntax and the New Deal had made his column an invaluable feature of the Washington *Post*. If staid Republican statesmen do not presently surprise themselves and all who know them by issuing statements in language more belligerent and complicated than they have heretofore used or heard, I shall be disappointed in my old friend and colleague. As a matter of fact, he was hardly settled in his new chair when a declaration appeared over the name of the Honorable Bertrand H. Snell, Republican leader in the House, intimating that Harry Hopkins is the real power behind Roosevelt. It contained some obscure allusions to hemoglobin and eurythmic dancing, and coyly expressed a hope that Hopkins would not consider the House Appropriations Committee "too damn dumb" to understand those subjects. This is believed to be the first time Snell was ever presented in a light role, but experts agree that is about how he would handle it. (Confidentially, I am told that he regards hemoglobin as just another New Deal hoax, intended to frighten the voters.)

Republicans are more at home in heavy parts. Thus, it will be interesting to study their technique on the wage-hour bill, now reported out of the House Labor Committee. Whether that measure comes to a vote in this session may depend on the action of Republican members of the Rules Committee. A significant dispute is in progress among them. Some, ever loyal to the interests they habitually serve, are determined to join the old Southern sweatshop gentlemen in smothering the bill. Others, blessed with broader views and longer vision, believe it would be excellent Republican politics to toss the measure into the House and let the Democrats fight over it. It is somewhat depressing to reflect that an issue vitally affecting the living standards and health of millions can be decided on such a plane, but the odds are that it will be decided on that plane—or under it.

The bill itself, providing initially for a forty-four-hour maximum week and a twenty-five-cents-an-hour minimum wage, changing after three years to a forty-hour week and a forty-cent wage, obviously halts this side paradise. However, it would serve as a belated start in the right direction. Most desirable of all, it contains no differentials to favor the Southern sweatshop owner and lumber-camp operator. It affords a simple test of legislative decency.

One week of inquiry and reflection has been sufficient to convince me that my use of the word "adequate" in describing the President's spending-lending program was impetuous, to say the least. As the situation takes shape, it becomes more apparent that buying power resulting from the program will be spread alarmingly thin, especially that part which will remain after existing inventories have been absorbed. Until they are absorbed, buying power will not begin to operate to put men back to work. Industrialists are not going to produce new commodities until they sell what they have on hand. Last year the automobile industry produced the equivalent of 5,500,000 cars in finished cars and parts. A government statistician tells me that the equivalent of approximately 1,000,000 is still in stock. He further tells me there is reason to believe that the government program, by itself, can stimulate buying sufficiently to justify the production of more than 1,600,000 new cars this year. If a comparison of that figure with the figure of 5,500,000 produced last year affords a correct measure of the recovery to be expected, it is clear that the future is not promising.

This condition in the automobile industry is said to be the explanation of Henry Ford's invitation to the White House. If that is true it would seem to indicate that Roosevelt is at his wits' end. Ford has demonstrated a thousand times that all he knows is how to make automobiles and sell them at a profit when people are able to buy. When apprised of the invitation, he was quoted as saying his solution of present-day problems was a "back to the farm" movement. Among those problems he included, no doubt, agricultural surpluses, which he would reduce by making them larger. He was further quoted: "If people do not raise their own food they will have to have a dictator to tell them to do it." In dealing with the problems he helped to create, Ford's advice is quite as valuable as that which would be expected from his fellow-violator of the Wagner Act, Tom Girdler.

Since it has become more apparent that our embargo on shipments to Spain is operating to Franco's advantage, the President has received numerous appeals from Americans who do not wish to see another fascist dictatorship erected over the bodies of the Spanish people—at least, not with American assistance. Where Roosevelt's sympathy and that of Secretary Hull rest there is no doubt, but the situation is incredibly complicated and difficult. To correct it might require two acts of Congress. First, there is the embargo resolution of January, 1937, hastily passed to prevent the sailing of the Mar Cantabrico with

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a cargo of planes for Loyalist Spain. This futile and stupid legislation apparently was rushed through Congress at the insistence of a State Department clique during Hull's absence. He subsequently pronounced it "the worst act of the Roosevelt Administration."

In the following May Congress passed the Neutrality Act, which empowered the President, in his discretion, to prohibit shipments to countries where civil strife existed. When he exercised that power, there was every reason to expect that the result would be helpful to the government forces. Then Italian and German submarines gave Franco control of the sea, and the positions were reversed. However, among those who wish the embargo lifted there is a belief that American shipments could reach Loyalist Spain through France. This would be especially desirable at a stage when Germany and Italy might have strong reasons of their own for curtailing material aid to Franco.

The President could rescind his proclamation under the Neutrality Act by announcing that the Spanish civil war does not "threaten or endanger the peace of the United States." State Department officials argue, however, that the embargo explicit in the January resolution would still be in effect. Congress could repeal that, and it could also amend the Neutrality Act to exclude from its prohibitory provisions those countries which are engaged in civil strife. There is not, in my judgment, a remote chance that this Congress will do either. Sentiment there is still stubbornly, perhaps blindly, isolationist. And many believe that the only way to be neutral is to be absolutely neutral, even at the expense of those you love and to the advantage of those you despise. It is interesting to note that Roosevelt is firmly convinced that lifting the embargo now would help Franco.

The situation has something of an analogy in the decision of Congress last week to adjourn and take a junket to Charleston to see the azalea blossoms—which had blossomed and disappeared two weeks earlier.

Spain Won't Surrender

BY LOUIS FISCHER

Barcelona, April 25

WISHFUL thinkers and the misinformed must finally abandon the idea that the fascists have won or will soon win the international war being fought at the expense of Spain. The spring Aragon offensive of the quadruple alliance—Franco, Hitler, Mussolini, and non-intervention—has failed. Its purpose was to end the war. It merely succeeded in investing a few unimportant fishing villages along the Mediterranean coast and galvanizing a harried people into heightened resistance.

Many of the best brigades of the Madrid army of the center are now in Catalonia. Foreign military observers believe that these blood-baptized troops, seconded by newly trained reinforcements, will at least hold all the Catalan lines. During the last three weeks the army's morale has improved. So has its equipment. Much new war material can be seen at the front and on the roads.

Catalonia remains in intimate contact with central Spain. Air mail is exchanged between Madrid, Valencia, and Barcelona every day. A daily twenty-four-hour steamer service connects Valencia and Barcelona. I heard a minister here radio-telephone Madrid. Franco cut republican Spain in two but the parts live and function.

General Miaja, father of the first Madrid army of the center, today was called upon to create another. He has plenty of raw recruits, plenty of enthusiasm, and Jesus Hernandez to start with. Hernandez, former Minister of Education, is quickly restoring to the political commissars their previous status and numerical strength. This is a political war, and the army must be kept politically alert. Otherwise it should be a regular army. Caballero, and even more Prieto, made the mistake of crippling the institution of political commissars because they objected to too many Communist commissars. I think Negrín's instincts will prevent him from falling into this error. The political commissars are the agents on the battlefield of the civilian population. This tie explains the tremendous tenacity, despite unprecedented punishment, of the republican armed forces. Aviation is important, but politics are a no less effective weapon. The outstanding bourgeois Catalan leader, until recently suspected of pro-armistice leanings, demanded the other day that he be given more work. He was reacting to Franco's decree, promulgated when the Generalissimo thought he would occupy Catalonia, abolishing Catalan autonomy and suppressing the use of the Catalan language. This rebel measure truly reflects the social ineptitude of the classes which support Franco. Denikin lost the Ukraine and Yudenich failed to take Petrograd because of a similar disregard for the susceptibilities of racial minorities. Whether it is on the steppes or in the sierras, the mentality is always the same. Salamanca's edict against Catalan autonomy has been worth an army corps to the republic. The Catalan middle class, always very nationalistic, sees the oppression which a fascist victory promises and is putting its shoulder to the wheel of the lumbering Loyalist chariot. During the last fortnight the Catalan attitude has visibly changed.

Simultaneously the problem of Anarchist collaboration with the government comes nearer a solution. Here, too, politics creates a new military potential. Two days ago when I was returning from Tortosa, which despite Franco's astute propaganda is not a seaplane base and

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couldn't be, my chauffeur had to stop a passing car to borrow a funnel full of gas to take us to the next pump. In the car were a major and a captain of the Twenty-fifth Division. The major was a Communist and the captain an Anarchist. The Communist had been wounded eight days before. He showed me nine wounds. A bullet went in the left side of his neck and passed out just in front of his Adam's apple. He talked hoarsely and he probably always will. He said he would soon be back at the front. The Anarchist, who still wore civilian clothes though he carried two revolvers, had recently been hit in the forearm, and it hung limp and useless by his side. He too would return to the front shortly. I asked him how he could fight in that condition. He replied proudly, "I am *dynamitero*. I'll work with one arm and direct operations." The Communist major declared, "I'm a Spaniard and am defending Spain." The Anarchist declared, "I was always opposed to governments, therefore armies, but am now protecting my country against invasion. If we were to leave it to the Left Republicans to defend the republic, it would die."

Drawing by Schreiber

General Franco

The new Anarchist minister, Segundo Blanco, in an interview with me, gave me the background of the captain's new attitude. Blanco, a former Asturias worker, said: "At this serious hour there is no room for either a Marxist or a libertarian totalitarianism. No party can force its will on the government. The recent UGT-CNT program of social change can be carried out with the consent of the bourgeoisie. The program must be achieved by legal and normal methods. Our first aim is to defeat fascism. We are interested not only in saving Spain. We want to save Europe. If Spain is lost, the cause of liberty is lost in Europe. In repelling the invader of Spain, therefore, we are fighting for our basic ideology." In response to this I said, "The Anarchists have made much progress since May, 1937." *"Hombre, si"* (man, yes), he exclaimed, and added, "But other parties now understand better our readiness to collaborate."

Whatever the reasons for this evolution, the fact is that the Anarchists criticize less and conform more. This political change is an additional military asset. The civilized practices of the Loyalists encourage the belief that rapprochement with other political groups is not inconceivable. When Negrín re-formed the government recently he wanted to keep Prieto in the Cabinet. In that event Caballero or a Caballero lieutenant might also have joined the ministry. Contacts between the members of the Negrín ministry and the Caballero faction continue.

Very late, after bitter, costly lessons, the republic is starting to move on almost all cylinders. To direct the titanic effort is a grueling task. First, there is the business of keeping the fronts intact despite the enemy's superiority in armaments. Today the weakest line seems to be that between the wedge to the Mediterranean from the Ebro south to Vinaroz—the Italian corridor, one might call it—and Castellon. If Franco can break through toward Valencia, it will be a big victory. He has mobility and hundreds of new airplanes and might push at another point, too. At this stage a big breach would further embarrass the military situation without being decisive. Barcelona, nevertheless, carries these responsibilities and cares courageously.

Economic difficulties are no less trying. Catalonia had a peace-time population of approximately three million. Now a million and a half refugees have been added. I've seen these unfortunates housed in Barcelona churches, subsisting on beans and bread and soup, camping in thousands in olive groves, getting lifts with their bundles on military lorries, and crowding the roads from the Ebro to Barcelona with their mule-drawn carts loaded high with mattresses, ewe lambs, chicken coops, and flowers surmounted by the old grandmother or the baby, who are unable to trudge with the rest of the family literally hundreds of kilometers behind the vehicle. They aggravate Catalonia's food scarcity. You have only to look into the eyes of those who watch you eat a hasty picnic lunch of imported food, en route to the front, to know that this country is hungry. At Villa Franco the other day, where my car stopped for repairs, I collected almost all the village children by starting to distribute half-inch squares of chocolate to the boys and girls who watched the operation. They smacked their lips and yearned for more. They hadn't tasted sweets in almost two years. Couldn't a few million kind folks abroad forgo their candy for a fortnight in order to gladden these children?

Next to food, the shortage of electricity is giving the government many a headache. To be sure, a pall of smoke still hovers over the Barcelona factory districts. Juan Comorera, Catalan Minister of Economy, told me that all the munition factories were working full blast on power from their own Diesels or from coal or from the remaining hydro stations. Half of the export industries are still functioning normally, and more are expected to be brought into operation with coal imported from England and elsewhere, but civilian lighting and urban transportation have been curtailed (in Barcelona, however, many autobuses appeared this week), and in-

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dustries working for domestic consumption are seriously handicapped.

To face such problems while fighting two great powers, and disloyal generals as well, required a special arsenal of spirit and convictions. The Spanish republic possesses it. The mettle of the Catalans hasn't yet been tried in this war. Catalonia is also fortunate in being the richest portion of Spain. The other day my automobile broke down at Vendrell, a large village about thirty kilometers from Barcelona. I had three hours in which to get acquainted with the place. It had well-stocked private stores, selling shirts, caps, toilet paper, soap, flashlights, radios, textiles, toys, baskets, shoes, fountain pens, watches, stationery, ink, paints, woolens displayed by custom tailors, corsets, electric appliances, and sewing-machines. The inhabitants were well dressed and the women heavily perfumed. The cafes and restaurants had numerous patrons. I got a telephone connection with Barcelona in forty minutes. All this bespeaks reserves of material and the normal organization of life—in other words, a vast capacity for further resistance. And yet the rebels could pulverize Vendrell, as they have Tortosa, by repeated air raids. If the government can buy sufficient airplanes, it will defeat the rebels and weaken Europe's totalitarian aggressors. (With China simultaneously engaging Japan, peace could thus be guaranteed.) The world would benefit—and Spain can pay.

If anyone is still unconvinced that this is a democratic country he might ponder the following fact: General Asensio, former commander-in-chief of the army of the center and subsequently Caballero's Assistant Minister of War, is under arrest charged with treason. While in prison he has written a book justifying his conduct of the war. The book has been published and is being sold openly in Barcelona bookstores. Asensio sent autographed copies of the book to several members of the government.

[*The last-minute arrival of Mr. Fischer's cable from Barcelona compels us to postpone until next week the final tabulation and analysis of* The Nation's *foreign-policy poll, which was scheduled for this issue.*—EDITORS THE NATION.]

"Ken"—the Inside Story

BY GEORGE SELDES

THE repudiation of the press by the American people was clearly demonstrated by the 1936 Presidential election. It may not have been complete, but it showed a vast popular disillusion. That someone would capitalize on the situation followed logically. In March, 1937, the idea of publishing a magazine for the masses who had lost faith in the newspapers was discussed by three persons in Chicago.

David A. Smart, young and rich, had made a success with a clothing-trade paper called *Apparel Arts;* Arnold Gingrich, novelist and art connoisseur, had years ago proposed a magazine "for men only"; the two had produced *Esquire,* now selling 600,000 copies a month, and later *Coronet,* which thrived despite the depression and lack of advertising. The third man was Jay Cooke Allen, one of America's great journalists. Allen was to be editor. The magazine was to be called *Ken—the Insiders' World.* Its function would be to tell the truth behind the news, to explore hitherto unexplored fields of American journalism, to defy the forces and men who are forever saying, "You can't print that."

On a boat Paris-bound in April, 1937, Smart gave evidence of a social conscience. "This magazine," he said to Allen, "will be the first big break the under-dog in America has had." All the left and liberal writers were to be employed, and at a $150,000 guest house to be bought or erected facing Central Park the contributors to *Ken* were to taste the Smart largess.

Ken's left-of-center policy was definitely settled when Smart, back in America, received a letter from Allen in Paris explaining the French People's Front. *Ken* was to be a magazine for the coming People's Front in America; it was to take no sides in factional disputes of labor organizations and liberal-labor parties but was to represent a united front of all decent and intelligent liberal and progressive elements. "Thrilled by your letter," Smart cabled, and Allen engaged various liberal journalists to write the "inside story" of Europe.

Then the trouble began. Having accepted Smart's promises at their face value, Allen went to work on a large scale, engaging editors, research workers, and assistants, and ordering big investigations which took time and money. There was nothing picayune about the Allen plans. Since Smart had conceived of *Ken* as a left-wing *Fortune,* the staff prepared a 20,000-word feature on the fascist wars on democracy, to lead the first issue. Then a conference was held; and the left-wing *Fortune* was scrapped in favor of a left-wing *Time.* Again the staff prepared a dummy, concentrating on short items instead of one big lead story; and again there was a dispute over the essential nature of the magazine.

I have seen the dummies, layouts, stories, illustrations, and photographs which Allen prepared, all accurate and interesting pieces, superior to anything which has yet appeared in *Ken,* and yet I have heard Smart sneer about spending forty or fifty thousand dollars on the Allen regime "and not having a damn story to show for it." I am now convinced that a desire to economize, not the style or character of the magazine as worked out by Allen, caused the eventual separation of Smart and Allen.

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In October, when the Allen staff was fired, I was shown the supposedly final prospectus which was to bear out the magazine's stated purpose—"*Ken* will be one step left of center . . . anti-war and anti-fascist." Two solid pages boasted that the magazine would not be objective but biased—nobly biased in favor of the awakening liberal-labor movement in America. Gingrich had written that freedom of the press today existed only for the publishers, "and half of them are busy salaaming sacred cows, while the other half are grinding axes on the emery wheel of their own prejudices. Between them they constitute a barrier separating the general public from the insider's world." I was invited to join the staff with the understanding that it would be my job to break down this barrier.

The press department, which I was to edit, would constitute about a third of the magazine, or 30,000 words, including a "lie detector" to which the 10,000 members of the American Newspaper Guild would contribute. Once each month there would be an investigation of the press of a state metropolis. The emphasis was always to be on suppressed news. Gingrich took Dana's motto, "What the good Lord lets happen I am not ashamed to print," as our slogan and made it even more forceful by replacing "ashamed" with "afraid."

My department having been decided upon, I was introduced to Mr. Smart, who reassured me about the policy of the magazine. He spoke of the old days, when his family had been poor and his aunt a friend of Eugene V. Debs. "Even if I were merely doing *Ken* as a business proposition," he continued, "it would be O.K. Here's this new reservoir—the labor movement, the A. F. of L., the C. I. O., the American Labor Party, the progressives in the West—ten or twenty million people who can read. We're going to tap this reservoir." Smart asked what my conception of the magazine was. I replied, "The kind Lincoln Steffens would have been glad to edit." Whereupon Smart said, clinching the matter, "We want something like a cross between *The Nation* and *Life*—liberal and lively, something for the millions, not highbrow like *The Nation* and the *New Republic,* but popular, full of illustrations, and just as liberal."

In addition to the press department Smart suggested that I do a series of articles on the American Legion and the money behind it; another series on Falsehood in War and Peace showing how it is possible to fool all the people all the time when government and press cooperate; a piece on how Franco and the fascist journalists fake the news; an article on the publishers' use of gunmen, thugs, machine-guns, and gas, based on quotations from the La Follette hearings; a dozen pieces showing how the press colors or fakes the news about such subjects as picketing, the American Labor Party, red-baiting, the Supreme Court, social security, the public utilities, the President, various political and social minorities. Smart wanted the Legion series right away because it would cause talk, and "we have got to put this magazine over by causing talk."

It was I who first brought up the subject of big business and advertising pressure. "Suppose they attack *Esquire?*" I said. "If you are going to tell the unpublished truth about everything you'll get in trouble with the advertisers just as magazines and newspapers always do." Smart opened a copy of *Esquire.* "Seventy per cent men's clothes," he said, "20 per cent whiskey and soda; what is there to expose? We're invulnerable. They can't attack us. You'll have an absolutely free hand." Overcome by enthusiasm I said, "Well, this is a reporter's dream of Utopia; I'd work for nothing—." But Smart was magnanimous. He offered to give me a modest salary compared with what the other editors were getting until we got a million circulation, then he would put me "in the upper-bracket income class."

Enthusiasm blinds one. I realize now that in the journalistic Utopia in which I seemed to live in November, 1937, I paid no attention to the following suspicious items: prospectuses which said that Paul de Kruif and Ernest Hemingway were working editors when they were not editors at all but contributors; the sudden firing of almost the entire Allen staff, with, at Allen's request, two weeks' pay; troubles about payment to authors engaged by Allen; Smart's proposal to employ George Sokolsky (I had the minutes of the Nye munitions investigation naming Sokolsky in an arms deal, and an investigator of the La Follette committee had informed me that Sokolsky would shortly be named as being in the employ of the National Association of Manufacturers); lack of union organization among the workers and their expressed dissatisfaction over wages.

Against these facts was my strong belief that so long as I kept away from men's clothing and the liquor industry I would have a free hand in publishing a free journal. Accordingly, I wrote seven articles on the American Legion, four on Falsehood in Peace and War, an exposé of the Paris *Herald Tribune,* dozens of items for the lie detector of the press—a total of at least 80,000 words. Meanwhile the gossip columnists and the trade press spread the story that *Ken* was to represent the liberal-labor movement, tell the truth, shame the devil, and defy the foul fiend of big business.

The joy in the editors' offices was more than balanced by the gloom in *Ken's* advertising department. It was not satisfied with the way things were going. Some publishers took space, including my own. Consumers' Union telephoned it would take a page, but the shouts of victory from the advertising solicitors turned to groans when the manager decided that a Consumers' Union announcement would further repel commercial manufacturers. No advertising agency, no big business house appeared willing to be on either friendly or commercial terms with a publication that admitted it favored the liberal and labor movement in America. "All that the agencies are asking," one of the solicitors told me, "is that the policy be changed to anti-labor and anti-liberal."

Then the Chicago business office descended on the New York business office. There was a banquet and a conference with advertising leaders, and immediately afterward Gingrich, who represented the editorial department, called me to his hotel and said, "They not only

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backed me up against the wall, they backed me through the wall." Subsequently I was told to "lay off commodities." Since I had written about politics, not patent medicines, I could not understand this request.

Shortly afterward Smart burst into my office white with fury. "Who told you to write those Legion articles?" he shouted. "You did," I replied. "Well, damn it, I've been trying to sign up the Prudential Life for three years; they keep saying *Esquire* isn't their type. So I'm about to land them for *Ken* when you write a piece saying a bunch of bankers formed the Legion and control it, and Franklin D'Olier of the Prudential Life is one of this royal family. We haven't a chance to get this ad if we run your Legion series."

The series is now in the wastebasket.

Naturally I told the story around the office. Every advertising man could tie or cap it. The *Esquire* office classic is about a writer who mentioned an Englishman putting plain water instead of soda into his whiskey, "as most Englishmen do." The story passed the editors and got into proof. At the last minute, however, it was caught. "As most Englishmen do" came out, and the author was summoned. "Cracks like that will ruin us," one of the business heads shouted at him. "Do you realize what that would have cost us? White Rock—$50,000; Canada Dry—$50,000; Hoffmann Beverages—don't you think when you write?"

I got along famously with the advertising, circulation, and business departments. I liked the new cynicism which pervaded their offices, as it once did the city room—before the guild arrived. "If journalists are a lot of prostitutes," one of the advertising solicitors said, "what are we? We're the dung collectors."

If big business and soda water and commodities were out, there was still the press department: newspapers didn't advertise much in magazines. I got letters from the Associated Press and United Press proving that the Hearst publications were changing "Loyalists" to "reds" in A. P. and U. P. dispatches, and otherwise distorting the news from Spain. I got out a department on Americans who had declared themselves in favor of Mussolini, Hitler, and Franco. In the La Follette civil-liberties reports I found some great stuff on spies, machine-guns, gas, and red-baiting which no newspaper had published.

Smart thought I was going on at too great length. "Once you've said the news is colored, that's enough," he said. I asked if the press department was out. He said, "No, but it ought to be something else." I wrote to Gingrich asking for an inside letter on the inside situation, but before I got it I learned from one of my friends in the advertising department that a big agency had threatened to withdraw a fortune in advertising from *Esquire* "if as much as one line pro-labor appeared in *Ken*." The next day I noticed a change in the "inspirational talks" which I often overheard in the office next to mine. "Tell them we have changed our policy. Tell them we are anti-Communist now as well as anti-fascist. Tell your contacts we're going after the reds too." Various circulars and letters containing red-baiting phrases were sent out.

The advertising men who had previously been so friendly to me now refused to talk. Outside the office one of them told me that they had had an order from Smart in Chicago not to talk to me. "You are a bad influence. He says we lose our sincerity as solicitors when we talk to you. You undermine advertising morale." A day or two later I received a telegram from Smart asking me to do my work at home as my office was needed for a photographer.

My "work" now consisted of a series of articles on foreign dictators and their love life, the only subjects I had left which, according to Smart, were "up to *Ken* standards." And finally Gingrich informed me that "the financial winds seem to be blowing the daylights out of that apparently fair-weather form of liberalism that was one of the major tenets of *Ken* as you and I first planned it." Big business, and advertising, its spearhead in the attack on the liberal-labor movement in America, had won out completely. There remained but one mystery: why the press department, the main feature, had not appeared. It may not be without significance in this connection that Mr. Smart has for years also been operating the Esquire Features Syndicate, which sells comic strips and other items to more than a hundred papers.

This was the history of *Ken* up to the return of Hemingway from Spain. Hearing rumors in Key West that there had been a change in policy, he telegraphed me for the prospectus and consulted with his fellow "working editor," Paul de Kruif. Even before *Ken* appeared Hemingway had decided he did not want to be listed as an editor. De Kruif had protested against the red-baiting cartoons in the first issue and also threatened to withdraw his name. He sent in his resignation on April 18 with the announcement that he would not contribute any articles in the future. John L. Spivak, also listed as an editor but actually the roving staff correspondent, left word in New York when he left for Czechoslovakia that he would resign if red-baiting continued. De Kruif and others have cabled to Hemingway in Barcelona suggesting that he discontinue writing for *Ken*. At a meeting of almost a score of New York contributors a letter was written to Smart demanding that the original policy of the magazine be restored and the pressure of the advertising agencies defied.

The first issue of *Ken*, although filled with anti-Hitler and anti-Mussolini material, contained almost nothing about the United States of America. Red-baiting, the sop for big business, was represented in some hurriedly gathered cartoons, one of which lumped Loyalist Spain with fascist Spain as part of the black plague of dictatorship. The second issue continued to expose Mussolini and Hitler and spies in Mexico. These foreign contributions, it must be admitted, appear to be well documented and reliable. And there have been two articles on domestic labor problems. But it is apparent that far-away fascism is *Ken's* real foe; there has been no mention of vigilante fascism, or the National Association of Manufacturers' brand of fascism as exposed by the La

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Follette committee, or all the other fascist movements masquerading under patriotic names in America and drawing money from the big business men who are also the big advertisers.

Considerable speculation is heard in various quarters about *Ken's* future. There are persons who would like to make it an anti-Administration organ for the 1940 campaign, the spokesman of big business. The McClure Syndicate release for April 20 stated that Albert Lasker, head of the powerful Lord and Thomas advertising agency, has a financial interest in *Ken.*

The history of *Ken* teaches many important lessons. It proves for our time and generation the sad truth learned by a dozen weeklies and monthlies in the great muckraking era of 1905 to 1917—that big business and advertising will either change a magazine's policy from liberal to reactionary or try to ruin the magazine. Having spent $100,000 or more to promote *Ken,* its publishers perceived that a liberal policy might seriously affect advertising revenue. The impossibility of combining progress with profit, demonstrated before the war, is even clearer today, with the advertising agencies becoming the leaders in a class-conscious attack on progressive liberalism. On the other hand we have proof that a large audience exists which would support a popular magazine really free from advertising control. When *Ken* announced a left-of-center policy, a quarter of a million advance buyers appeared. Many of them still want the press department, the lie detector, the truth behind the newspapers, the liberal and pro-labor policy. There is certainly a field for the very magazine which *Ken* promised to be in its first prospectus, which the first two issues fail to be with any degree of completeness. To publish such a magazine for the millions a considerable sum of money is needed along with a certain amount of courage.

Handouts for Railroads

BY ELIOT JANEWAY

LOANS of millions of dollars of government money to roads ready without them for bankruptcy and reorganization; loans with no purpose other than that of preserving intact a fantastic structure of railroad bonded debt inherited from the days of Jay Gould and Daniel Drew; loans which do not help but hinder recovery in the United States—this is the record of government subsidy to the railroad industry. Pump-priming directed to the railroads would probably be as effective and swift in promoting recovery as any pump-priming could be. But the aid extended to the railroads by the government has taken the form of subsidies to bond-holders, not of loans which could be used to put men and machines to work through railroad operation and railroad buying. The $435,000,000 poured into the railroads by Jesse Jones, head of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, was not for the purpose of increasing business activity through government aid, but was intended simply to save the bonded-debt structure of the railroads.

This protection of widows, orphans, insurance companies, and trust funds might be laudable if it were successful. But despite RFC loans all but a very few railroad bonds are selling today at prices that only actual or impending bankruptcy would warrant. Every RFC loan, every attempt to rescue an already doomed debt structure by adding a new debt to it, has caused the value of the threatened bonds to shrink again. Each shrinkage in value brings the prospect of final bankruptcy closer. Mr. Jones's lending policy has neither provided adequate support for railroad bonds nor released railroad earnings for spending in, say, the stagnant steel industry, with the increased activity and employment that such spending would bring.

The incorrectness of the RFC lending policy is underscored by an admission made before the Wheeler committee by Mortimer N. Buckner, chairman of the board of the New York Trust Company. Mr. Buckner stated that any railroad which was not in need of reorganization and had adequate collateral was able to obtain a loan from a bank. The RFC was not needed to furnish such loans; the New York Trust Company would be glad to make them. Mr. Buckner's competence as a witness may be established by a quotation from a confidential letter written in 1934 by the president of the bankrupt Milwaukee Railroad: "So far as the railroads are concerned, the RFC is Jesse Jones, and, confidentially, through Mort Buckner we have the best possible entry there. I cannot speak too warmly of the appreciation I have of the way Mort has taken off his coat and kept constantly at work on this job" (the securing of a loan for the Milwaukee on the eve of its bankruptcy). The RFC, Buckner evidently thought, was to advance money to roads which the banks refused to help. But the RFC, it should be remembered, was created in January, 1932, to supply credit which the banks, then in dire trouble, were in no position to extend. Since we have it on Mr. Buckner's authoritative word that the banks are now "very anxious" to supply such credit when it is sound banking policy to do so, the current loans to bail out the roads would seem to be beyond the confines of the RFC enabling act.

The history of some of these loans is worth examining. In December of 1934 the directors of the Milwaukee, originally capitalized at $803,000,000, were agreed that the road would have to go through the wringer. Nevertheless, they applied to the Interstate Commerce Com-

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mission for permission to obtain a loan from the RFC. (It is necessary for the ICC to certify that any road which wishes to secure an RFC loan is in sound financial shape and not in need of reorganization.) The ICC gave its consent. Then, with the aid of Mr. Buckner the Milwaukee obtained a loan from the RFC which increased its indebtedness to that organization to $11,000,000. A few months later it was in the bankruptcy courts for reorganization and has not yet emerged. Evidence of the road's unpardonably overcapitalized structure is found in the fact that the management itself subsequently proposed to reorganize it with a capital of only $590,000,000, whereas the original value was $803,000,000. Before the management abandoned this plan as "impractical," Mr. Jones attempted to speed up its completion by offering to put up an additional $24,000,000 to salvage his former loan of $11,000,000.

The Wabash, which the Pennsylvania controls, is another grossly overcapitalized occupant of the bankruptcy courts. After the Wabash had gone into receivership early in the depression, the RFC advanced it nearly $16,000,000 to enable it to continue interest payments to preferred bond-holders and to repay half of the money it owed to banks—a high-handed and questionable procedure unless we are to have a new definition of bankruptcy. Certainly it is no business of the United States government to be the "fall guy" for creditors of insolvent railroads. The reorganization plan of the management is evidence of the gratitude which the government may expect from the interests it is so anxious to rescue. Preferred bond-holders of the Wabash, under this plan, are to receive 100 per cent value in first-mortgage bonds maturing in thirty years. The scaling down of obligations inherent in reorganization is not to touch these preferred bond-holders. The government, however, is to be paid off in bonds on which interest is due only if it is earned after the payments on the first-mortgage bonds of preferred bond-holders have been taken care of in full, and which will not mature for forty or fifty years. As Senator Wheeler said, this plan is indeed "raw treatment for the taxpayers."

The first casualty of 1938 was the Erie, which found its way into the bankruptcy courts just twenty days after the ICC had certified that it was not in need of reorganization. Among its obligations was $16,000,000 owed to the RFC. The chain of events which led to the bankruptcy of the Erie began with the road's request for an additional $6,000,000 to meet interest bills. It was on this occasion that the ICC declared the road sound. The RFC, in arranging for collateral to cover the loan, asked the rich Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, which has a controlling interest in the Erie, to put up a $2,500,000 guaranty. This the C. and O. refused to do. It had already sunk $45,000,000 in the Erie, but it evidently felt that the policy of throwing good money after bad had best be left to the government. Its chairman, Herbert Fitzpatrick, a Van Sweringen veteran, declared that he at any rate was in disagreement with the ICC's certification of the Erie as sound. The road, he felt, was in need of reorganization, and he accordingly refused to let the C. and O. sink another penny in its own property. The Erie promptly repudiated its January 1 interest payments and went into bankruptcy. The C. and O.'s stand is the measure of the confidence of the railroad magnates themselves in the structure of bonded debt which Mr. Jones is trying to preserve.

The RFC is still trying to save other railroads now hovering on the brink of bankruptcy. Foremost among these is the Baltimore and Ohio. If the B. and O. goes bankrupt—and its bonds are already selling at bankruptcy levels—America will witness its first billion-dollar bankrupt corporation, barely four decades after its first billion-dollar corporation was formed. Interest payments on the B. and O.'s enormously overcapitalized debt structure fall due inexorably while the revenues of this steel-and-coal carrier dry up. The road must earn almost $100,000 a day to pay its fixed interest charges, and a high Administration official has stated that its present earnings come to about one-tenth of this figure, though rigorous economies have been effected that allow no money for maintenance or sinking funds or for payment of bills or taxes. A receivership that would stop this drain of interest payments and put the money into maintaining the property would be a mercy. As it is, the elementary expenditures now being deferred are increasing the huge sum that will have to be spent to put the road back into shape.

The RFC is simply prolonging the agony of the B. and O. by using taxpayers' money to help it meet its interest payments, and the road is piling up an enormous debt to the government—$80,000,000 at the end of 1937. Last December the B. and O. asked for an additional $8,223,000 to keep itself out of bankruptcy during the first quarter of 1938. The RFC and the ICC permitted the loan on condition that it be used for maintenance. And this is what the ICC sanctioned as maintenance: part of the loan went to pay for past maintenance, completed before the loan was asked for; part to pay off notes on equipment bought in 1922 and 1926; part to meet the pay rolls when pay-roll funds were being requisitioned to pay interest; and part for maintenance pay rolls in March and April. But on April 1 twenty-four hours after the last instalment of the loan for maintenance pay rolls had been received, the management posted a furlough notice for its clerks, effective April 1.

Here is a road with no liquid resources, facing an endless succession of monthly interest bills, and with a bonded indebtedness of $51,000,000 maturing in 1939, and of still more later. It will not be simply an occasional two or three million in 1939 but this plus $51,000,000 that Mr. Jones will have to make over to the B. and O. if he is to save it from bankruptcy. As for the more immediate problem of keeping it out of bankruptcy in 1938, Mr. Jones, when questioned about this, said that the carrier's officials were confident that by cutting all expenses to the bone it would pull through the year. Is aiding a billion-dollar corporation to lay off workers and stop buying materials and supplies a recovery policy?

Three minor roads, the Boston and Maine, the Pittsburgh and West Virginia, and the Lehigh Valley, are

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also being kept out of the bankruptcy courts by the RFC. All three are controlled by the Pennsylvania. Each is borrowing money in order to pay its bond-holders. Like the Chesapeake and Ohio in the case of its creature the Erie, the Pennsylvania is unwilling to spend its own money to save its property. After all, why should it, when the RFC will step in? The unsound nature of the RFC loans is well illustrated by those to the Lehigh, which turned to the RFC only after exhausting its credit at the New York and Philadelphia banks, borrowing from one to pay another. Collateral offered and accepted for the RFC loan included a twenty-two-year-old claim against the German government for the Black Tom explosion.

(The gilt-edged Southern Pacific has just obtained a $14,000,000 RFC loan, after borrowing $20,000,000 from banks which refuse to advance more. Its condition offers perhaps the clearest proof of the need of the roads for an interest moratorium. The Southern Pacific, a crop carrier, has just moved the greatest crop in history, but fixed charges which average $30,000,000 a year have bled the road so thoroughly that six lean months have rendered it incapable of carrying its tremendous bonded burden. The $14,000,000 it is asking for now and the $6,000,000 or more it may well have to ask for later are not reducing its debts but simply piling them higher and transferring them from private creditors to the public.)

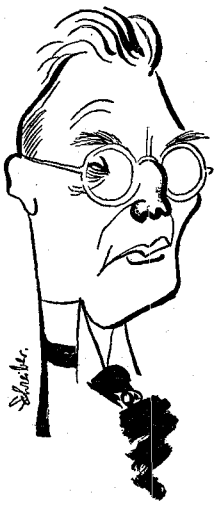
The interest moratorium which the RFC has labored so valiantly to prevent is approaching none the less. In the middle of April the finest road in the country, the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fé, deferred an interest payment for the first time since 1899. It was not earning the charges on one of its bonds, the price of which promptly fell from 87 to 72. Insurance companies and trust funds have already had to accept such losses. And every time a government loan is added to the creaking debt structure of the railroads, bond prices sink further under its weight. State laws in New York and Connecticut, where the great insurance companies and fiduciary institutions are concentrated, now prohibit the purchase by such organizations of more than half the railroad bonds outstanding—although companies unfortunately saddled with such paper may continue to hold it.

The activity of the RFC, then, is not helping the bondholders. It is forcing roads to operate under ruinous fixed charges which prevent normal purchasing for maintenance and improvement. A government official admitted recently, "Lending money to the B. and O. for maintenance so that it can pay its interest is like lending money to someone for rent so that he can gamble his rent money on the races." Apparently there is to be no end if Mr. Jones has his way. Meanwhile, a first-rate panic hangs over the bond market, and the B. and O. and other roads continue to lay off men and to suspend all purchases.

Dr. Seyss and Mr. Inquart

BY LUDWIG LORE

"THEY say that a man never learns who his true friends are until he's in trouble. In my case trouble showed me my enemies too." With these words Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg of Austria received the news that Arthur Seyss-Inquart had been made the governor of the Nazi province of Austria.



Arthur Seyss-Inquart

You will look in vain for the name of Austria's new dictator in the earlier files of the American and European press. Seyss-Inquart is that *rara avis* among dictators, a man who, until his accession to power, was almost unknown to the people of the country he rules. He is not a newcomer in Austrian political circles, however. Those around Schuschnigg knew him as the Chancellor's friend, a well-dressed man of aristocratic appearance and impeccable manners who enjoyed considerable popularity in Viennese society, as a successful attorney with a large and prosperous Jewish clientele, as a Catholic who had never joined the Christian Social or any other party except the "Fatherland Front," as a man who had always favored union with Germany but who had never—to that they would have sworn—become a member of or even publicly sympathized with the Austrian National Socialist Party. They did not know that he had been for years the secret Austrian representative of Adolf Hitler, that he directed the countless agents who carried on National Socialist propaganda and terror in all parts of Austria, that, as the *Paris-Midi* revealed a few weeks ago, he secured passports, residence permits, and other necessary papers for illegal emissaries from the Third Reich who could never have obtained these documents through regular Austrian government channels.

One can imagine Dr. Schuschnigg's amazement when, during the Berchtesgaden conversations, the Führer insisted that Seyss-Inquart be appointed Minister of the Interior with full authority over the Austrian police apparatus. The Austrian Chancellor thought he must have misunderstood. Seyss-Inquart, he assured Hitler, was

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without political experience, without the technical experience required of a Minister of the Interior. He suggested giving Seyss-Inquart the Ministry of Justice, but Hitler insisted, and Chancellor Schuschnigg returned to Vienna much disturbed. When he saw Seyss-Inquart again it was at the head of a troop of twenty S. A.'s. It was Seyss-Inquart who ordered the Chancellor to remain in his apartment and stationed an armed guard there, and it was he who announced, simultaneously with Hermann Göring, that his friend Schuschnigg would be tried for treason. Vienna's suave "mystery man" is out in the open at last.

The new dictator of Austria was born on July 2, 1892, in Stannern near Iglau, now a Sudeten German district of Czechoslovakia in which only servants and market women speak Czech, and German is the language of all social, public, and business life. During his early student years at Iglau he associated with a group of young Sudeten Germans who were later to become the leaders of the Czechoslovakian Nazi movement. Rudolf Jung, the chief of the old National Socialist Labor Party, Karl Hans Strobl, Sudeten Germany's outstanding man of letters, Dr. Wilhelm Sebekowski, the theorist of the Nazi movement, and Walter Wannemacher, editor-in-chief of the Sudeten German Nazi organ *Die Zeit,* were his closest friends and remained on intimate terms with him in the years that followed.

In the World War Seyss-Inquart served on the Isonzo front until he was discharged with a severe leg wound. He still limps from the effects of that injury. The sector next to his was under the command of another young law student, a certain Kurt Schuschnigg, with whom he remained on the best of terms through the post-war years despite differences of political opinion. Both were devout Catholics, but Schuschnigg became a member of the Christian Social Party while Seyss-Inquart refused all party ties. When Dollfuss created Austria's authoritarian state, both became members of the Austrian Corporate Council. After Schuschnigg became Chancellor, Seyss-Inquart made his only speech from the floor, a protest against Schuschnigg's attack on Austrian pan-Germans for placing "improper emphasis on German nationalist aims." He called the Chancellor sharply to account for his "deliberate violation of the German idea" and declared, "To me that I am a German is just as important as that I am an Austrian. The time is past when we can afford to be divided into national groups."

Though Austria's secret service was never especially efficient, it is hard to understand how Hitler's right-hand man could have lived his double life for so many years without once betraying his activities. It seems incredible that his plotting should not have been discovered sooner. His home was the center of the Nazi web in which Austria was enmeshed. He was at all times in direct contact with Berlin. When the National Socialist Party of Austria was dissolved shortly before the assassination of Dollfuss, the German government sent into Austria some eighty special agents to reorganize it as an underground movement. These men entered Austria with Seyss-Inquart's assistance and met at his home to discuss their plans. After they left for their various posts, they communicated with one another through him. In all questions of importance he was the final arbiter.

Of course a widely known and respected attorney has all sorts of connections. Dr. Seyss-Inquart used them all in the interests of his chief. In 1935 he arranged to bring the Austrian Legion back across the border from Bavaria in small groups and hold them in readiness for a German invasion. This plan was abandoned when Mussolini intervened, but Hitler had other resources. A "poison pen" campaign launched against the Duce's protege, Prince Rüdiger von Starhemberg, discredited in the eyes of the Austrian people not only the bankrupt and degenerate aristocrat but his Italian sponsor as well. Schuschnigg was not entirely ignorant of Seyss-Inquart's part in this, but he tolerated it because the quashing of Starhemberg's aspirations fitted so admirably into his own program.

In July of 1936 a group of Austrian National Socialists came to an understanding with the Schuschnigg government for a reconciliation with the Fatherland Front. The negotiations were conducted by a committee of seven, with Dr. Leopold Tavs as secretary general. The Tavs committee was officially recognized by Schuschnigg until the Viennese police discovered that it was planning a putsch to overthrow the government, which would have given the Reich an excuse to cross the Austrian frontier. The plan provided for the annexation not only of Austria but of the German area of Czechoslovakia as well. At Berchtesgaden Schuschnigg accused Hitler of having abetted this plot.

On his return to Vienna the Chancellor prepared a written report of what occurred in Hitler's mountain retreat and sent the document to Prague for safe keeping. When the situation in Prague became dangerous a few days later, he ordered it taken to London, where it is now in safe hands. After the plan was discovered, says the Manchester *Guardian,* Herr von Papen, Germany's envoy to Austria, took a flying trip to Berchtesgaden to discuss the situation with the Führer. He then brought Chancellor Schuschnigg the Führer's invitation to talk things over. The only condition was that neither England nor France must learn of the projected visit. What happened after that is public knowledge.

During all these negotiations Seyss-Inquart was on duty behind the scenes. Outwardly he continued to play his part as Dr. Schuschnigg's adviser, urging him to come to an understanding with Germany and even going to Hitler as Schuschnigg's trusted representative, after the Berchtesgaden conversations, to persuade the Führer to accept a compromise.

What the rule of the new Nazi Governor of Austria will be like remains to be seen. The man's easy acceptance of questionable methods is hardly encouraging, yet it is a well-known fact that he has always had liberal leanings. But for his overweening ambition he would probably have gone the way of Otto Strasser and the others who found themselves in opposition to the official party

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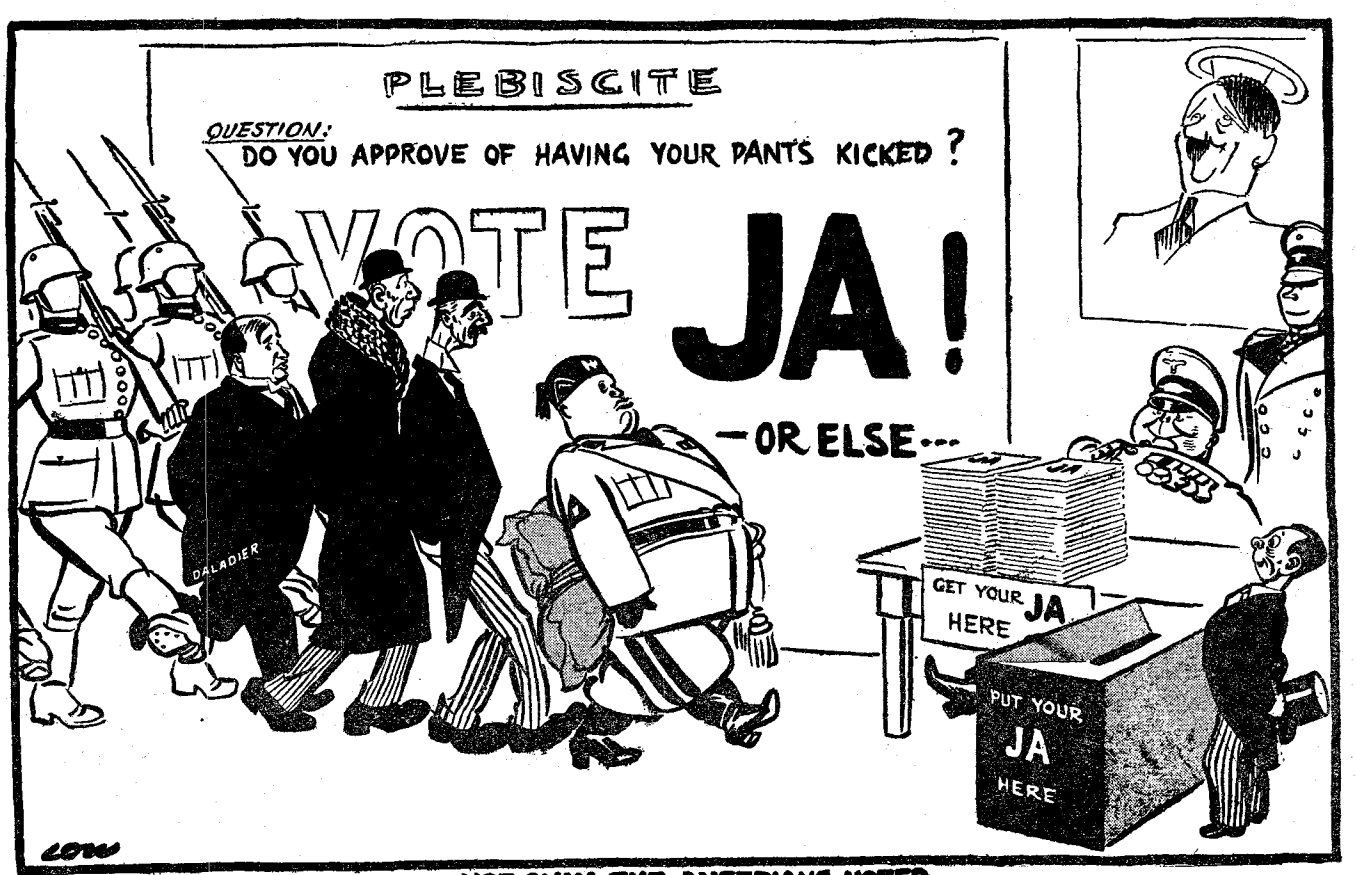
views. He was attracted by the ideas of the Social Democrats during his student years and even toyed for a time with the idea of joining the party, which had a large following in the Sudeten German region. He was on friendly terms with the aged Social Democratic leader Pernerstorffer, and used this and other connections on various occasions to get the help of the Austrian Social Democrats in his numerous enterprises. His first attempts were met with distrust, but early in 1937 he succeeded in persuading several prominent trade-union leaders to join the Fatherland Front. After the appointment of the Nazi Cabinet in Vienna he ordered the reinstatement of eleven members of the Republican (Social Democratic) Defense Corps in Vienna's Fire Department, from which they had been ousted by Dollfuss after the February uprising in 1934. Dr. Neubacher, the new Nazi Oberbürgermeister of the Austrian capital, celebrated the event with a solemn address in which he welcomed the reinstated men back as "fighters for a new and better order."

Seyss-Inquart is not a "strong man" according to modern dictator standards, but Hitler would probably not care to see a strong man at the head of his Austrian province. What he needs is a pliable tool, a skilful politician who can play on every string until the people of Austria are firmly rooted in the German state. He can rely on Seyss-Inquart to keep faith because the one honest quality the man possesses is his absolute devotion to the German idea. He will be Hitler's man as long as the Führer gives reasonable assurance of his determination and ability to create a great Teutonic state in which the Sudeten Germans will come into their own. In the period of organization which preceded Hitler's "bloodless" conquest of Austria he was the ideal man. Largely through his efforts the plan for the annexation of Austria was so minutely worked out that the process of taking over the government proceeded practically without a hitch.

Certainly he is not overburdened by scruples or feelings. Though he had been the legal representative of Vienna's wealthiest Jews, he could close both eyes to anti-Semitic terrorism. In fact, the Saar leader, Bürckel, whom Hitler sent to Austria to manage the plebiscite campaign, warned Berlin that it should not proceed too rapidly against the Austrian Jewry. When interviewed regarding the sensational number of suicides, the new governor called it "a natural consequence of social adjustment." It was Seyss-Inquart who persuaded Bürckel to win Cardinal Innitzer's support for *Anschluss* with promises which may or may not be kept; the experience of the Saar Catholics with Bürckel should have warned the Cardinal.

Austria will henceforth be known as the Ostmark province of the Third Reich. In his capacity as Statthalter Dr. Seyss-Inquart will give the new province a sound business administration during the period of incorporation and adjustment and will be perfectly content to leave the life and liberty of the Austrian people in his master's hands. That Hitler chose Seyss-Inquart to carry out the Austrian revolution is another example of his political shrewdness. This man is no Starhemberg. He will never become a serious competitor for the Führer's supremacy, nor will he, and that is an important consideration, give a divided allegiance which might, in time, play into the Duce's hands.



NOT ONLY THE AUSTRIANS VOTED.

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Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

A Problem in Ethics

NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN has posed a serious problem for students of ethics and morality. He has perhaps deferred the coming of war by making a shameful bargain with Mussolini. He has sacrificed Spain deliberately and finally. He has lent his sanction to the base conquest of Ethiopia. In return, the Mediterranean tension between the two countries is eased and Mussolini gives his approval to the latest British aggression, the new Arabian "protectorate" just set up by the English north of the Red Sea—in other words, a new colony for England at the very moment that perfidious Albion has been asking all the world to concentrate its attention on the wrongdoings of Hitler and Mussolini. So everyone will now judge what has happened according to his own particular philosophy and his ethical standards. There will be some to say that so ignoble a pact should never have been signed, even in the interest of peace; and there will be plenty of others who will point out that this is an imperfect world, that one must be practical, that one cannot hope to achieve the ideal, and that therefore it was the best thing to do.

Actually the pact means little or nothing beyond this recognition of the aggressions of either side. Mussolini promises to get out of Spain just when Franco has about won with Mussolini's aid; and it must not be overlooked that no date whatever is set in the treaty for carrying it into effect. It is all contingent upon the date of Mussolini's final withdrawal from Spain. That may be six months or a year from now. True, the treaty affirms England's intention to keep the Suez Canal open at all times for international use, but to that it was bound anyway. What is most important of all is whether the signature of Benito Mussolini is worth anything. It has pleased him to put his name to this document as he has put his signature to others—only to forget that fact whenever it suited his purpose. There is no truth, no honor, and no sincerity in him any more than in Hitler. I agree with Robert Dell, who has just said that "an agreement with Mussolini's signature . . . is not worth the ink with which it is written." This arrangement with England suits Mussolini for the moment. It will last only so long as he thinks it is to his advantage, and not a day longer.

Curiously enough, this grossly immoral bargain has nowhere been so acclaimed as in Washington. The President himself went out of his way publicly to applaud the accord in a statement read by him at his regular press conference. True, he said that our government "does not attempt to pass upon the political features" of this agreement, but he added that it has seen its conclusion "with sympathetic interest because it is proof of the value of peaceful negotiations." Yet ours is the country which has refused to recognize the theft of Manchoukuo and the rape of Ethiopia and has only recognized the conquest of Austria because of the extraordinary situation of that country. Even before the President spoke, the specially favored New York *Times* reported from Washington that the State Department was rejoicing over the great success of the "realistic policy" of Chamberlain.

What this means is that the State Department now confidently counts upon England's being in a position to decrease its forces in the Mediterranean and send some battleships to Singapore—battleships are always the foundation of Mr. Hull's policy in the Far East. With England threatening Japan at Singapore, our State Department advocates of the mailed-fist policy with Japan—and war if necessary—can be counted on to be more aggressive than ever. I do not know whether it is true that the President, as has been declared, has said that we must have a policy "to scare the pants off Japan," but no further proof is needed that the State Department is ready for "parallel action" with Great Britain in its effort to achieve American dominance in Asian waters. True, the Japanese are obstinately refusing to commit more outrages against Americans, but this may be remedied any day, and even this fly in the ointment cannot keep the State Department from openly hailing the touching sight of Chamberlain and Mussolini guaranteeing each other's swag in the name of peace and harmony.

The American advocates of collective security cannot, however, be as happy about it. They have felt that we must stand by to protect democratic England and France from a desperate Mussolini. They will find it harder now to win the American people to their point of view in the face of the holy alliance of Chamberlain and the Duce. Our people will hardly rush to the rescue of England when England is ready to talk business with the dictator on such terms. If I were an Englishman I might rejoice that the Mediterranean was safe, but I should hang my head with shame that my country more than any other was responsible for the destruction of the fair young democracy of Spain and that it had acquiesced in a wrong against which Gladstone and John Bright, Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and even Palmerston would have protested. If I were an Englishman I should blush to recall how the British peacemakers at Versailles indorsed the new world order of Wilson, in which there were to be no more colonies but only mandated territory. Finally, to me it seems that the price paid by Chamberlain is far too great in dishonor for the slight betterment of the peace situation he has obtained.

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

THE BATTLE OF THE BOOK CLUBS

BY KEITH HUTCHISON

LONG ago Dean Swift described satirically the Battle of the Books in St. James's Library, where the buckram hosts of "Ancients" and "Moderns" clashed dustily from dawn till dark. In Britain today there is a new and genuine battle of the books, part of a world battle which on other fronts is being fought with far deadlier weapons, a battle to decide whether we have any future to look forward to save a fascist one.

There is, of course, nothing new in politico-literary warfare. In eighteenth-century England the pamphleteer was a power in the land, and ever since then printed propaganda has been second only to oratory as a political weapon. But a new technique has recently been introduced with the organization of book clubs whose aims are educational rather than polemical. Their object is not so much to answer opponents as to build up an informed army of adherents, solidly wedded to a definite point of view.

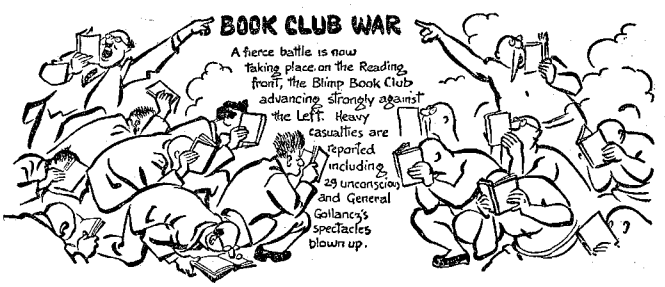
The pioneer in this field was the Left Book Club, formed scarcely two years ago for the purpose of rallying anti-fascists of every kind. From the start it went with a bang, indicating the reality of the demand as well as the enormous energy and enthusiasm of its promoters. In less than a year it had 40,000 members and, branching out into a variety of activities, had become a genuine political portent. Rather late in the day the forces on the right awoke to its significance and hastily martialed an opposition. Last summer there was a proliferation of book clubs that almost disorganized the British book trade. So far as I have been able to check, there are now two "right" book clubs (one calling itself "National"), three religious, one Liberal, and one Socialist club. In addition, two or three non-political clubs, offering similar financial inducements, have been formed.

Despite this competition the Left Book Club is keeping well in front; as the prototype it deserves fuller description. According to John Strachey, one of the founders, the original scheme was for a club backed by all publishers of left-wing literature. Only Victor Gollancz, a comparatively new but extremely enterprising London house, accepted it and, after a year of waiting for other publishers to come in, went ahead alone. The basic idea was to make available to members a special edition of one book a month, chosen by a selection committee of three, at a uniform price of two shillings and sixpence. At the beginning these were books taken from the Gollancz list for which the ordinary buyer had to pay a much higher price. Now the club often orders books from authors, and in some cases they do not become available in trade editions.

Members are committed to the monthly choice whether the subject appeals to them or not. But as the club grew, it began to offer optional "additional" or "supplementary" books, mostly at the same price, but in any case well below the price of the book to the general public. The mounting torrent of "left" books merely served to increase the appetite for them, and in order to feed it new series were rapidly launched—short topical books, cheap educational primers specially written for the club, reprints of classics such as Tawney's "Acquisitive Society." Recently, at a club meeting which packed London's two largest concert halls, Gollancz announced yet another development—the issue of "a mass of cheap popular fiction, meant to reach the millions of non-thinkers." These stories, intended to offset the common type of fiction in which the villain is a red, will presumably feature left heroes foiling dastardly fascist plots.

In its choice of books the club has shown considerable catholicity, and when, as frequently happens, it is accused of being a Communist under-cover organization, it is able to point to such works as "The Labor Party in Perspective" by C. R. Attlee, leader of the Labor Party. Nor have its publications all been directly political. They have included a novel by Malraux and historical works like Huberman's "Man's Wordly Goods." A book which brought many members to the club was "Walls Have Mouths," a powerful description of English prison life by W. F. R. Macartney, credited with some responsibility for the penal reforms recently instituted in Britain.

At an early stage of the Left Book Club's career, members began to form discussion circles, getting in touch with one another through the *Left News,* distributed free to every member with his monthly book. These groups multiplied rapidly, and it was soon necessary to engage organizers and create a central office. Starting very informally, many of these groups have become important local bodies, promoting meetings and engaging in propaganda for the club and other left-wing objectives. This movement began on a geographical basis, but recently in London it has been developing on guild lines and forming scientists', actors', commercial travelers', lawyers',


BOOK CLUB WAR
A fierce battle is now taking place on the Reading front, the Blimp Book Club advancing strongly against the Left. Heavy casualties are reported including 29 unconscious and General Gollancz's spectacles blown up.

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musicians', and other professional groups. Individual membership in the club now exceeds 50,000, and there are over 750 discussion groups, including several in the dominions and colonies.

Obviously, an organized body of this kind, inspired with a strong political point of view, with the active interest of its members guaranteed by their outlay for books of at least $6 a year, is a force to be reckoned with. It is not surprising that the Tories should view it with alarm, but the uneasiness it has caused orthodox leaders of the Labor Party requires further explanation. Victor Gollancz has insisted frequently that the club is not a political body, that it exists simply to publish books, written from many different points of view but broadly anti-fascist, in the hope that from criticisms and discussions "certain general ideas and practical policies will emerge on which all can agree as a basis for the struggle against the common enemy." This is rather a long way of saying that it is promoting the united front—a policy which the Labor Party has time and again decisively rejected. There is, indeed, little doubt that the Left Book Club, ably seconded by Herren Hitler and Chamberlain, has done a great deal for this cause. Not being a political party and being outside old political squabbles, it has provided an opportunity for all kinds of laborites, liberals, and radicals to get together. It has encouraged its members to work for the Labor Party, and there is strong evidence that it has brought in many new recruits and revived the interest of old hands.

Since this is absolutely on all fours with the present Communist Party line, it is not surprising that the club should be accused of Communist inspiration. Victor Gollancz has always maintained that the relationship does not go beyond sympathy and offers as evidence the fact that while the club has published books by Communists, it has also published many others which would certainly qualify for Moscow's index. Moreover, he points out that on the all-powerful Selection Committee, composed of himself, Professor Laski, and John Strachey, only the last-named is a member of the Communist Party. Nevertheless, the suspicion of Communist leanings is not entirely groundless; certainly the ideological lead given to members through articles and reviews in the *Left News* is definitely Marxist-Stalinist. There are, however, indications that these questions are coming to have only an academic interest. Under the pressure of events the united front appears to be taking shape in Britain not as a formal treaty but as a means of action.

There is no sign, as yet, of any corresponding ferment in the Tory ranks, though their book clubs claim to be attracting a large following. Both the "Right" Book Club* and the National Book Association (president, Earl Baldwin) have adopted the general features of their left rival, including discussion groups, but both have one additional feature—the lengthy list of titled patrons without which no Tory organization would feel well and reactionary body—an intellectual haven for the Colonel truly launched. The former is the more dyed-in-the-wool Blimps immortalized by Low. Characteristic is its recent choice of "I Know These Dictators," a lick-spittle glorification of Hitler and Mussolini by G. Ward Price. The National Book Association claims to be neither left nor right and to have "no prejudicial ax to grind." It is solely concerned with giving the public the undistorted facts. A list of its early choices hardly suggests that this ambition is being realized.

There, intrenched behind their treatises, stand the opposing armies, leaflets waving defiantly. Perhaps in Britain the battle can be fought out with these civilized weapons, but in these times the distance from book to bomb is woefully short.

* Since this article was written, the demise of the "Right" Book Club has been reported.

BOOKS

The Health of the Nation

THE FIGHT FOR LIFE. By Paul de Kruif. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $3.50.

THERE is a good chance that this book will do for medicine what Upton Sinclair's "The Jungle" did for the stockyards. It is a truthful presentation of the stake the people have in their own health and an attempt to arouse them to action. If the man on the street, after reading of the faults that lie at the root of the inefficacy of organized medicine, does not galvanize his government into action, it will not be de Kruif's fault.

First let me brush aside a few very minor annoyances, which will no doubt be exaggerated by those seeking to obscure the real value of this work. The book is not written for grammarians, nor yet for those scientists who have nailed to their desks that nineteenth-century motto, "Here's to science, may it be of no use to anyone." Some scientists and doctors will flinch before its "overdramatization" of the fight against disease. But the book is aimed at arousing the general public's interest in its own needs and perils, and if overdramatization produces a mass consciousness of public-health problems, I for one am all for it. At times de Kruif does use too many rhetorical questions.

The first disease discussed is pellagra—that malady of the Southern poor, black and white alike. The discovery of its cause by Dr. Goldberger has not led to its disappearance. Here de Kruif puts his finger on a very sore spot in medicine, and rubs it raw before he is through—the gap in time between the scientific discovery of the cause of a disease and the use of the knowledge. The mighty efforts of the combined Red Cross and Public Health Service in educating the people have been partly successful only because the price of cotton has fallen so low that the share-croppers can now spare a little land for a kitchen garden and grow the greens which prevent pellagra. Many other well-known deficiency diseases—rickets, lack of vitamin D; scurvy, lack of vitamin C; certain forms of night-blindness, lack of vitamin A—are a charge on our economic system, and de Kruif does not hesitate to say so. The cure lies not in medicine but in adequate food.

The United States and England, peaks of civilization and science, have percentages of childbirth mortality second only to India. Sooner or later some good pamphleteer was bound to take these facts and stagger the public with them. The

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necessity for aseptic technique, too frequently forgotten in our less well-run hospitals, is clearly brought out (with a minor injustice to Lister, however). If an airplane disaster involving the loss of only six lives is investigated by the government, why can't it investigate a hospital with a high childbirth mortality? The simplicity of de Kruif's logic will irritate many. What is the death-rate in each doctor's practice, and why should it not be published? It is at this point that the self-appointed chiefs of organized medicine, I think, will try to discredit the book and its author.

As secretary of the President's Commission for Infantile Paralysis Research, de Kruif has had access to the front line of that fight and reports it with splendid detail, the mistakes as well as the successes. The huge gains that have been made because there were sufficient funds to buy animals for experimentation are given in terms of cost per rat or cost per monkey. We are today in a position to give battle to infantile paralysis, not because of a broad governmental public-health policy, but by virtue of the President's personal concern in the matter.

The recent attack on syphilis is well dealt with, as is also the new wonder chemical, sulfanilamide. It is a pity that in the history of this new bactericide more emphasis was not given to the internationalism of science. German, French, and English scientists, all contributed to our knowledge of this drug before it was taken up here. We in our turn have extended its usefulness.

Throughout the book de Kruif reiterates the impossibility of keeping the profit motive in medicine. There are millions who have nothing with which to pay for medical service. Are they to be left to die? The doctors and scientists cannot be expected to give their services free, for they too have to eat. There is only one answer possible if the have-nots are to be treated—medicine with government support. This is an eloquent and factual presentation of the need for a Department of Public Health with a budget, let us say, not smaller than that of the navy.

HUGH H. DARBY

Der Tag

THE GERMAN OCTOPUS. HITLER BIDS FOR WORLD POWER. By Henry C. Wolfe. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

FOR the better part of twenty years now Henry Wolfe has been observing conditions abroad, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. If as a free lance he has not been able to scoop newspaper correspondents on the day-to-day headlines, he is now able to scoop them on the news that will make tomorrow's headlines. For in "The German Octopus" Mr. Wolfe takes his reader to the center of things—Germany and the Nazi drive to the east. In concise chapters, and with few personal anecdotes or "inside" stories, he gives the first comprehensive survey of all the tentacles with which the German octopus seeks to dominate Central and Eastern Europe.

"France," he repeats, "won the war, but Germany has won the peace." Indeed, the post-war world, fashioned for the most part by France, is dead. We live in a pre-war world. On the Continent Berlin, not Paris, is in the saddle with the Nazis riding hard—for another fall perhaps.

Only this time, says Mr. Wolfe, Nazi Germany is determined to avoid the mistake of imperial Germany in 1918. The Central Powers then controlled what is now Poland and Lithuania, about half of Latvia, much of the Ukraine, and nearly all of Serbia. Rumania was begging for peace. Bulgaria and Turkey were allies. Pan-Germanism was triumphant. The road from Berlin to Bagdad was clear. Yet only a short time later all was lost. Germany had been defeated on the western front.

Today "Kaiser" Adolf and the other pan-German leaders of the Reich dream of a new push to the east. Only now—preparing for the next *Tag*—the strategy has been changed. Germany, Mr. Wolfe emphasizes, is "on the defensive in the west and on the offensive in the east."

The mainspring of Nazi foreign policy in Europe has been to take the bayonets out of France's eastern alliances. That is why Hitler's invasion of the forbidden Rhineland, though "apparently directed against the west, was actually aimed toward the east." The challenge of France's Maginot line was answered by the new "Maginot line" that Hitler has built on his side of the Rhine. If the Germans cannot get into France, neither can the French get into Germany, and—more important—neither can they give effective military aid to their eastern allies. Protected now by a strong defensive position in the west, the Nazis have begun their expected offensive in the east.

In October, 1937, Danzig fell to the Nazis. A few weeks ago Austria gave up the ghost. Today Czechoslovakia shivers in cold isolation, notwithstanding its French and Russian pacts. What next?

Plenty, says Mr. Wolfe. The Fascintern of Berlin-Rome-Tokyo, with its connections stretching from Lisbon to Bucharest, from Memel to Jerusalem, will keep the world jittery. Concentrating his attention on Germany, he notes that peace-loving Denmark fears that on the first day of the Second World War Germany will seize the Jutland coast for bases against Britain and will commandeer all of Denmark as a "war pantry" for the German larder.

Farther along the Baltic, Memel—half Nazi already—"is the key that may unlock the Baltic treasure chest for Hitler." Once there, it is only a sling-shot to Latvia and a bombing trip to Leningrad, and Hitler is determined to control the Baltic, especially if he meets unexpected opposition on the Danube.

Poland, of course, may upset his plans; for the Poles turn now to the Germans, now to the French and Russians. Playing for time, they may or may not fall in with Hitler, and Mr. Wolfe believes that there will some day be a day of reckoning between Berlin and Warsaw over the Corridor. Farther south, Nazis and their Rumanian fascist allies seek control of a wealthy land which, though nominally pro-French, could give Germany its badly needed war-time oil supply and a foothold near the "fertile" Ukraine of Nürnberg fame.

Bulgaria and Hungary also know which side their bread is buttered on. Hungry for lost territories, they may some day be forced to eat out of the very hand of their revisionist master. Of Yugoslavia Mr. Wolfe has several illuminating things to say. Nazis have a healthy respect for the Serbs. Realizing that Yugoslavia has no intention of exchanging its late Turkish oppression for any future German vassalage, Germany will be content merely to influence that nation's army, foreign policy, and export trade.

In Mr. Wolfe's view Hitler's grand dream is a Third Reich blanketing all Middle Europe—obliterating Czechoslovakia and Lithuania completely—with the Balkans as independent but allied countries. Then, says Mr. Wolfe, Hitler will turn to the west and settle accounts with France.

The most significant part of the book is the section in

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which the author discusses the Nazi push to the east in terms of its eventual meaning to France in the west. Thus his analysis of the present Czechoslovakian salient gets down to bedrock. While President Benes and others have sincerely admitted to him that the German minority has sometimes suffered injustices, Mr. Wolfe carefully underlines the fact that "the German drive against Czechoslovakia has nothing whatever to do with individual cases of Czech injustice toward Teutons. . . . [Henlein's aim] is to turn the tables entirely on the Czechs," and make them as helpless a minority as they were under the Hapsburgs. So long as Prague holds the fort, Hitler will still be a couple of jumps away from his *Mitteleuropa* and the Rumanian oil fields. But, warns Mr. Wolfe, "if Czechoslovakia goes down to defeat, France will not long remain a first-class power."

JULIAN BACH, JR.

Mr. Jerrold's World

GEORGIAN ADVENTURE. The Autobiography of Douglas Jerrold. Charles Scribner's Sons. $3.50.

DOUGLAS JERROLD is a great-grandson of Douglas Jerrold the wit, who was, if I remember correctly, a kind of second-rate Sydney Smith. Still another great-grandfather was a friend of Dickens and Thackeray, so that Mr. Jerrold belongs, all in all, to one of those English literary families who are accepted even by snobs, and who, in the male line, eat most of their meals at the Athenaeum or the Savile. (I have eaten in the homes of English literary families and I have eaten at the Savile—though not at the Athenaeum—and I don't blame them.) Now, turned forty-five and fourscore-rich in memories, Mr. Jerrold presents us with his autobiography. As the reviewers say, "Georgian Adventure" is a fascinating document.

Ten years ago I fancy this book would have been reviewed chiefly in terms of its wit and anecdote: how they turned the tables on Joad at the Oxford Union (rather good), what Frank Harris said to A. E. Housman at lunch (fair), the system of traffic lights which Gilbert Frankau maintained in the corridor outside his office, Philip Guedalla's description of North Oxford (very racy), and Professor Garrod retorting upon a female war-worker (a knockout). Today it is only possible to review "Georgian Adventure" for its opinions. When I say that Mr. Jerrold's father was a Catholic Liberal and that Mr. Jerrold is a Catholic, that he went to Westminster and Oxford, that he has almost too much of a war record, that he thinks Winston Churchill and Hilaire Belloc great men, that when he visited the United States he had the entrée with the Southern Agrarians, whose hospitality consisted of a round of battlefields, that he thinks the United States is fatally underpopulated ("Kentucky is the size of England; it has the population of England in the thirteenth century. Is it going to stop there?")—you will agree, I trust, that it is only possible to review "Georgian Adventure" for its opinions.

On the principle that enough is as good as a feast, a very few of Mr. Jerrold's impressions and comments should suffice. England, says Mr. Jerrold, has state capitalism, wherefore "we are hovering in the no man's land which divides state capitalism from *socialism*" (italics mine). Oswald Mosley is rather a dear fellow, though his movement "lacks the creative impulse"; "to call him a careerist is itself impertinence of the most vulgar order." Mosley "preaches in the East End not because he dislikes Jews, but because Jews dislike him."

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—*LEWIS GANNETT*
in N. Y. Herald Tribune

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Now as to the Duke of Windsor: "I will not be guilty of the impertinence of passing any judgment at all on the late King." However, of the late King Alfonso Mr. Jerrold risks the following impertinence: "He has learned everything there is to know of the problems of modern government. He has . . . the fullest and most detailed statistics of education, illiteracy, public health, foreign trade, and finance at his finger tips." Why not add "willing to work" and "salary no object" and insert in the (London) *Times?*

And of course Mr. Jerrold had a friend who was "foully murdered by the Spanish Communist government."

LOUIS KRONENBERGER

Florida Landscape

THE DAUGHTER. By Bessie Breuer. Simon and Schuster. $2.50.

BESSIE BREUER says in a note at the back of her book, "My sympathies are decidedly to the left, so far as writing is concerned . . . experimental writing is always *right* . . . age will subdue the creative spirit soon enough, so let the young be daring as long as they can." Miss Breuer's modernity is implicit in her book. Post-Marx, post-Freud, post D. H. Lawrence, post-Joyce, she writes of her intellectual young heroine's experiences in the small world of a Florida fishing island with much of the intensity, passion, and violence that give to the strange, exaggerated worlds of "Jane Eyre" and "Wuthering Heights" their permanent validity.

Miss Breuer half builds, half blasts into being the small, shabby winter resort, so cheap and pitiful against the background of Gulf and jungle. As long as she recreates with her own tools sights directly seen—the richness and beauty of tropical birds and trees, the hot sun, the sea-shells, the sea, the poverty both spiritual and actual of the human beings who exist or escape from life there—her story is completely absorbing. But at times, carried away by her own enthusiasm, her extraordinary powers of observation and sympathy, she drowns, deafens, and smothers the reader in more sights and smells and sensations than her artistic medium can carry.

So in the course of a very moving account of a sensitive girl's sexual and emotional awakening, the reader is resentfully shocked out of the world Miss Breuer has so successfully created into a series of purple patches he automatically labels Gertrude Stein or Hemingway or D. H. Lawrence. Annoyed by the juicy, over-ripe quality, not of Miss Breuer's own prose but of these borrowed props, he longs for more restraint, for a more ruthless digestion of material which would obviate this excess of "fine writing."

Miss Breuer's faults are worth mentioning largely because they are the defects of her virtues; because the accuracy of her perception, her vitality, her flair for describing places and people could be even more effective if they were less lavishly spilled. Inevitably she is less painstaking in working out the psychological and intellectual processes of her characters than in relating their physical and sensual adventures. Because of this unevenness in the craftsmanship "The Daughter" falls short of its goal as a work of art. But as a social document it says more to me, both explicitly and by implication, about the Florida landscape, about North versus South, rich versus poor, drunks, intellectuals, the whole contemporary American scene, than that much more adeptly written book "To Have or Have Not."

MINA CURTISS

Psychoanalysis and God

PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGION. By Carl Gustav Jung. Yale University Press. $2.

HERE comes Dr. Jung with a rich little book informing us that religion is an instinct of the human being and that in man's unconscious mind there exists an archetype of God, a preconscious, primordial idea of the cosmocreator! This archetype, of course, is no proof of His existence. It merely is a mental precondition and a characteristic of man's cerebral function. But where the religious instinct is suppressed or repressed, the doctor tells us; where people do not or can no longer project the divine image in its purity, the energy once invested in an existence as great as God "reappears under another name, calling itself 'Wotan' or 'State' or something ending with ism, even atheism, of which people believe, hope, and expect just as much as they formerly did of God." And if it does not appear under this disguise, he says, it will most certainly return in the mentality of the one from whom the death declaration (of God) has issued. He becomes a victim of "inflation"—and of a disruption which can produce a dual or a multiple personality.

Meanwhile, what of the persons for whom the old creeds and collective symbols are dead; who can neither accept a new disguise of the idea of God and a religion corrupted by worldliness and mob instincts nor find a personal symbol and thus give their instinct free play; and who are threatened by "inflation" and disruption? What can be done for them? "Psychology and Religion" is also an answer to this question. It suggests that psychoanalysis as practiced by the Zurich school has a technique for releasing the repressed instinct, permitting the unconscious to project symbols of the archetype and helping bring about what is tantamount to an immediate religious experience. The kernel of the intriguing book, indeed, is the history of such a typical conversion during psychoanalysis. The patient, a former Catholic, was a skeptic, a rationalist, and an intellectual who had developed a severe neurosis. During analysis he produced a series of dreams, seventy-three of which have been published in the annual *Eranos* for 1935. These dreams not only exhibited his religious conflict but expressed religious ideas in symbols closely related to, and in part identical with, those employed by the theologians, mystics, and alchemists of several hundred years ago. One even was the spit and image of a Thibetan mandala, or magic circle. The symbols deeply impressed the sufferer. In the end he endured an immediate religious experience. The neurosis disappeared. The adaptation to life was the obverse of the inferior ones flowing from regression to archaic modes of being.

Neither this patient nor any of those typified by him had access to or knowledge of the old esoteric texts and pictures in which symbols like those projected by their unconscious minds so largely figure. Indeed, Dr. Jung himself has familiarized himself with them only through decades of intensive study not alone of Christian lore and the mystical poetry of the Middle Ages but of such religions as Mithraism and such heresies as gnosticism and alchemy. Thus, the circumstances of the spontaneous regeneration of these symbols argues very strongly for the correctness of his assumption of a divine archetype in the unconscious mind. Simultaneously it casts some light into the sources of the heretical conflicts in medieval Christianity and of the more or less heterodox and heretical texts in which these symbols figure. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the persons who adjusted them-

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selves to life by projecting variant ideas of God through them were not entirely dissimilar in temperament to the moderns who project mandalas in the course of analysis. What the characteristics of this type are, and what causes its inability to avail itself of the highly organized collective symbols, the layman can only vaguely guess. Only the content common to the symbols of both groups intimates to him that one of them is a susceptibility to extreme and destructive erotic conflicts. Besides the identity of God and man, this common content principally is the quaternity or, what it comes to, the bisexuality of the deity.

To the predominantly masculine Trinity all these dreamers wish to add a fourth principle, which sometimes is the Evil One—from behind whose figure emerge the body, the earth, woman, and the feminine creative principle. Catholicism would seem to have met their need by the promulgation of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. But it has not; and the dreamers' obsession with the idea of the quaternity of God points to an unusual irreconciliation with Eros, who after all demands distinct sexes. For this reason the layman cannot help suspecting that while Dr. Jung's technique for readjusting these sufferers partly was an encouragement of them to take their religious instinct seriously and give it ample play, it also, more than his excellent book overtly confesses, was the old one by which the hard-boiled Freudians free their patients of infantile fixations.

PAUL ROSENFELD

Shorter Notices

JUDGE LYNCH. HIS FIRST HUNDRED YEARS. By Frank Shay. Ives Washburn, Inc. $2.50.

Frank Shay's earnest and well-documented brief for the impeachment of Judge Lynch, whose century in office has been the shame of America, will be the handbook for advocates of real anti-lynching legislation. The cumulative effect of horror heaped on horror which Mr. Shay's excellent writing achieves even in his statistical recitals should serve to renew the struggle for the elimination of our jungle "justice." While the annual number of lynchings has been declining—a fact used by the opponents of legislation—there has been a decided increase in the ferocity of the mob and its ingenuity in devising new tortures. Government action is as essential today as ever in our history. Unfortunately, Mr. Shay for some reason fails to discuss, except for a few sentences in the preface, the nature and probable results of proposed federal legislation. His last chapter is a summary of the various state enactments already on the statute books and points the need for Congressional action only by implication. Another serious omission is the failure to describe the notorious Elaine massacre, resulting in the famous Arkansas peonage cases in the Supreme Court, which still haunts the memories of sharecroppers. But perhaps Mr. Shay felt—and with some merit—that in brevity lay greater effectiveness. He has unquestionably turned out the sort of book that should give sleepless nights to the Senatorial filibusters.

CONCERT PITCH. By Elliot Paul. Random House. $2.50.

Set in the complex, chicane-riddled music circles of contemporary Paris, and dealing for the most part with the neurotic, the aimless, and the spiritually bankrupt among those seeking careers in music, "Concert Pitch" reads at times like a footnote to "The Waste Land." In t[illegible]ration the —although presented with little

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—JACOB BAKER, *Pres., United Federal Workers of America*

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young pianist with a mother fixation, the famous impresario at the mercy of homosexual desires, the nihilist who spits on mankind and fumes his way to death, the Dadaists and their intellectual lunacies—all the unhealthy emotions, the hothouse living, the doubt-sick thinking characteristic of decadent artists and transition periods. Unfortunately, the relationship which occupies the center of the stage, that between the expatriate American high-placed in Parisian music journalism and a woman emotionally so wrapped up in the career of her pianist son that she lives only vicariously, is little more than mildly absorbing. Its sorry conclusion was, I thought, its most forceful and effective episode. With its variety of virtuosi, critics, impresarios, patrons, and composers, its concerts, its music theorizing—this, it should be said, is fresh and vigorous—and its musicians' shop talk, "Concert Pitch" is a fairly complete picture of the milieu it deals with. As a novel, however, it is no more than a competent account of a tenuous love affair between two curiously unimpressive personalities. To those who read "The Life and Death of a Spanish Town" it will probably prove disappointing.

DRAMA

The Unlearned Lesson

GRACE GEORGE and Tallulah Bankhead are appearing at the Playhouse in a brilliant revival of Somerset Maugham's "The Circle." When that comedy was first performed here nearly seventeen years ago, it seemed already a little old-fashioned, largely, I think, because of a certain almost Pineroesque explicitness in the diagraming of the problem, but it has aged hardly at all during the interval since, and it seems to me now almost as good as it seemed then. The dialogue is remarkably crisp and biting, but that is not all, for there are present also certain qualities more difficult to name which lift it above the usual level of comedies in the same smart and "sophisticated" vein. Perhaps one had best rest content with saying merely that Maugham's obvious intellectual superiority manages somehow to make itself felt here as it so often has in other works which thereby became, as this one does, better than the merely popular commodities with which they so successfully compete.

Probably he himself would be among the first to admit that he is not a great playwright. He never takes the trouble to invent his characters from the ground up, preferring instead to borrow lay figures from the dramatic storehouse and to adapt to his purpose these puppets whose strings other craftsmen have taught him how to manipulate. But into their mouths he puts fresh speeches, and if one never believes for a moment that they are really alive, neither does one ever catch them doing or saying anything which is merely stupid or expected. His virtue is, in other words, the result, not of creative imagination, but of a singularly shrewd and critical intelligence which never fails to command the respect of the hearer even at the moment when he is most aware that what he is admiring is not a work of high imagination but merely an entertainment devised by a puppet-master of mo[illegible]n intellectual integrity as well as of [illegible]elligence. And when the play

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moral is explicit and general, the puppets serve almost as well as freshly imagined characters would. After all, one needs only cleverly animated lay figures to demonstrate that a discontented young wife about to make a break for it in the company of her lover would not be deterred by the warnings of a grumpy old couple who can now no longer understand why either ever thought the other worth the sacrifices both made in the distant day when they eloped. The moral, by the way, is commonly stated to be that we can never learn from the experience of others. I wonder, however, if it is not that the old couple based their hope of dissuading the young one on a false premise. They seemed to assume that people elope because they think that the best way to prepare for a happy old age.

Despite her years, Grace George is not less than superb, and her performance affords a lesson in acting which Miss Bankhead, in the far less exacting role of the young wife, might study with profit. Miss Bankhead does not even try to act except intermittently. Between her occasional big scenes she either does nothing at all or, what is perhaps worse from the standpoint of a performance, relies for attention upon the casual exploitation of the charms of her voice or gestures or general personality. Miss George, on the other hand, is the character she is presenting from the moment she puts foot on the stage to the moment she leaves it. Here is no matter of "moments" but something perfectly maintained—a characterization which is continuous, flowing, and unified; which continues to exist as unmistakably when she is apparently doing nothing as it does on the occasions when she is the center of attention. It is not often that one has the pleasure of watching so complete a performance, and though Miss George has as much right as Dr. Johnson had to say, "I consider that I have done enough for the public," it would be something to be thankful for if she would appear more frequently.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

"What a Life" (Biltmore Theater) is a pleasant little comedy concerning the difficulties which a high-school lad falls into when he is forced, for romantic reasons, to score a high grade in his Roman history exam. It is extremely well directed and well cast. Ezra Stone, as the youthful hero, gives a most convincing performance. On the whole the play owes its appeal to a fresh youthfulness of spirit and natural dialogue rather than to any originality in situation or conception.

M. G.

RECORDS

TO BEGIN with music that deserves performance, and then to engage the musicians who can play this music best—this should be the procedure of concert-giving; actually it is what all profess but few practice. The League of Music Lovers did it this season when it offered all of Beethoven's String Quartets played by the Budapest Quartet; and this series of concerts—which ranked in artistic distinction and importance with the Toscanini series—received no publicity, no oily Sunday article by Mr. Gilman, no recording by Victor. These went instead to the activities of the New Friends of Music, which, professing to begin last season with Beethoven and Brahms, actually began with Artur Schnabel, who

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Should the U. S. Government Join in Concerted Action Against the Fascist States?

YES says EARL BROWDER
General Secretary, Communist Party, U.S.A.

NO says ROBERT MORSS LOVETT
Chairman
FREDERICK J. LIBBY
Executive Secretary, National Council for the Prevention of War

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SHOULD PEOPLE VOTE ON WAR?

Should the American people, who do the dying and the paying, be given the right to vote on this country's entry into a future foreign war?

Sen. Robert M. La Follette, Jr. is the author of a proposed constitutional amendment providing for a popular referendum on future declarations of war. That amendment is now pending before the U. S. senate.

The Progressive, La Follette's national weekly newspaper, is conducting a nation-wide poll on whether such a war referendum amendment should be adopted.

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chose to play—magnificently—Schumann, Mozart, and Schubert; or which, beginning with Artur Schnabel, ended with Karl Ulrich Schnabel, whose playing was not magnificent; or which, when it did begin with Beethoven, had Opus 132 played by the Budapest Quartet, but Opus 127 played by the Gordon; or which, beginning with the idea of presenting unfamiliar along with the familiar works of Beethoven, seemed unable to tell an unfamiliar work that deserved to be heard from one that deserved to be left in obscurity, and ended by presenting indiscriminately music as characterless as the Piano Quartet Opus 16 with music as strikingly individual as the String Quintet Opus 29—which, in sum, beginning with the normal mixture of loudly advertised ideals in purpose and the things that water down these ideals in private decision, ended by presenting the normal mixture of good and bad in music and performance, a mixture to which Victor now gives permanence on records.

On the one hand, then, we get a performance by the excellent Pasquier Trio of a Schubert String Trio (two records, $3.50), an early exercise in which one must be a program annotator to discern "the sensibility of feeling and the distinction of thought that is recognized as Schubertian." And on the other hand the great Trio Opus 99 as played by Karl Ulrich Schnabel and Messrs. Onnou and Maas of the Pro Arte Quartet (four records, $8). The performance is polished, sensitive; the recording is admirably clear and faithful to timbre; both, however, are reduced to insignificance for me by the power of the opening phrases of the work as delivered by Casals, Thibaut, and Cortot in the old Victor set, the dynamic quality of their performance throughout, the characteristic saliency of Casals's style, the distinction of Thibaut's, the beautifully adjusted playing of Cortot. For these things I am willing to put up with the defects of recording; and I hope Victor will retain the old set in its catalogue.

Of Mozart there is the Quartet K. 493 for piano and strings (three records, $5), a lovely work, with fine playing by the Pasquier Trio and uncustomarily restrained piano playing by Hortense Monath—so restrained, in fact, as to be insufficiently heard at times (this fault in balance may be partly in the recording). On a single record ($1.50) is a beautiful performance by the Pasquier Trio and René Le Roy of the charming little Quartet K. 298 for flute and strings. And finally the "Dorfmusikanten" Sextet K. 522 for strings and two horns (two records, $4.50), played for all its fun is worth by the Kolisch Quartet and Messrs. Caputo and Barrows. Mozart's horseplay warrants the loud laughs it got from the Friends of Music audience; but I like even better the Mozart wit, which in the String Quartet K. 458 did not get as much as a chuckle.

Two sets contain a number of Schubert's four-hand piano works played by Artur and Karl Ulrich Schnabel. In set 436 ($16), which is the one I have heard so far, all of four records are given to the Divertissement Hongroise, the tedium of which is not lessened by the performance. And on three other records are some marches which I do not find much more interesting. Only one record (14829)—that of the wonderful Andantino Varié Opus 84, played with precision and sensitiveness—offers evidence of the fact that Schubert wrote some of his finest music in this medium.

There are, finally, two vocal records that are worth attention: Schubert's "Der Hirt auf dem Felsen," exquisitely sung by Elisabeth Schumann ($2); and Mozart's "An Chloë" and "Das Veilchen," beautifully sung by Ria Ginster ($1.50).

B. H. HAGGIN

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Letters to the Editors

Hitler's Next Victim

Dear Sirs: The query, Who will be the next to fall a prey to Herr Hitler? is now on all lips. Most people say Czechoslovakia; some guess Danzig or Memel. Actually there is every indication that it will be Denmark's turn. Not only does the persistent, often violent Nazi agitation in North Schleswig foreshadow German action in this area, but such intentions have openly been announced by Hitler's own mouthpiece.

Shortly before Christmas, at a secret conference held at Aabenraa (Apenrade), Dr. Jens Möller, the Berlin-appointed leader of the German Nazi Party in North Schleswig, announced amid enthusiastic cheers that German troops would be marching over the Danish frontier "within the next six months," with a view to "restoring order in North Schleswig."

In view of what has happened to Austria, this sensational statement, which leaked out by the indiscretion of an opposition Nazi leader named Jep Nissen, must be taken seriously, despite the widespread skepticism with which it was originally received in Danish official circles. Today it is the general opinion in Copenhagen—though very few people voice it in public—that Germany will shortly raise the "North Schleswig question," and try to get back from Denmark, by bilateral negotiations with pressure, the territory lost through the Treaty of Versailles.

North Schleswig was returned to Denmark by the plebiscite of February 10, 1920, which gave a majority of 75,431 Danish against 25,329 German votes. Today the German minority in the ceded territory numbers less than 15 per cent. It enjoys probably the best treatment accorded to any minority in Europe and is well provided with both public (state-supported) and private German schools.

JOACHIM JOESTEN

Copenhagen, Denmark, April 3

Utilities as a Risk

Dear Sirs: Sumner H. Slichter in his article on Risks—the Key to Recovery, in *The Nation* of March 12, asserted that "the utility industry, more than almost any other, is in an economic position to make capital outlays" if only the government will make plain the fact that "legitimate private investments in them will not be destroyed." Such assertions as this are made repeatedly by the utility heads and by the conservative press that speaks for them. But I respectfully urge that an industry pleading for the right to live, for that reason alone if for no other, has ceased to be a good investment risk.

Surely the present government in the person of Mr. Roosevelt is but a passing factor in creating the utility fears. What investor can overlook the continuous retreat of the utilities before menacing public scrutiny? What investor can feel sure that even if today's government agreed to advance no farther into the utility field, tomorrow's government would be similarly bound? Mr. Roosevelt cannot bind a possible Labor government of 1940 or 1944. Does Mr. Slichter believe that utility investors do not see the handwriting on the wall?

The assurance the utilities would ask for new investments is beyond any man's power to grant—beyond even the power of the government, assuming it were so disposed. So we may safely assume that new investments in the utility field will be made by the government itself, or they will not be made.

F. A. SIEVERMAN, JR.

New York, April 13

Fascism in England

Dear Sirs: An article in *The Nation* of January 15 entitled Fighting Fascism by Law, by Lucille B. Milner, purported to give a picture of the fascist situation in England, but was in fact devoted almost entirely to attacking the Home Office for the partiality which, the article declared, it displayed toward Mosley and the British Union of Fascists. The article gave a completely false picture of the situation.

The British Union of Fascists has without doubt suffered a serious setback. It put up forty-nine candidates in London at the last municipal elections in November. Not one of them was elected, not even in Bethnal Green, the area in which it claimed to be strongest. The total number of votes polled in constituencies with B. U. F. candidates was 265,077. Votes polled by the B. U. F. numbered 27,409—just over 10 per cent.

As the membership of the B. U. F. was never known, it is of course impossible to estimate how many belong to it today, but that it has decreased is certain. The number of meetings has also much decreased. A new technique, however, has now been developed. Mosley has made a strong appeal for funds to carry on his propaganda, and he and his lieutenants are stumping the country holding indoor meetings at which fascist doctrines are propounded. It is quite obvious that such a technique is in the long run far more dangerous than open-air meetings at street corners.

There has been a considerable decrease, indeed almost a complete cessation, of assaults on Jews, which even twelve months ago were grossly exaggerated. There have been some thirty reported cases of assault or insult, mostly of a very minor character, in the past twelve months. Referring to the L. C. C. elections, to write of "hooliganism unparalleled in the long history of the County Council" shows a complete lack of proportion. The L. C. C. elections are of little real interest to the great majority of electors, and the hooliganism mentioned consisted of a number of assaults engendered in the heat of the contest, which in some cases the Jews repaid in good measure, but nothing on the scale suggested by Mrs. Milner.

The passing of the Public Order Act is sufficient proof, if any were needed, that the government does not favor fascism, and it has had a good deal to do with the weakening of the movement. The disappearance of the black shirts, black jackboots, and peaked caps, with Sam Brown belts for officers, was a staggering blow. Processions of shambling youths, either bare-headed or with caps, even with brass bands in front, make little popular appeal.

It is grossly unfair to allege that the police, or what is even worse, the police magistrates, men of the highest standing, exhibit any leniency to the fascists. In almost every case investigation has shown that what is called partiality has been an attempt on the part of the police to avoid unnecessary trouble and to quiet down what might have developed otherwise into an ugly fight. Mrs. Milner states that the introduction of plain-clothes men and night patrols has been of little value. As a matter of fact, the increased police protection, now withdrawn, in the East End of London completely stamped the trouble out. As

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to her allegation that the plain-clothes officers were the worst offenders, Mrs. Milner does not seem to realize that American and English police methods are very different, and that an English police officer who behaved as she alleges on what she calls "considerable evidence" would be out of the force and pensionless within twenty-four hours.

Can anything better illustrate the spirit in which Mrs. Milner's article was written than her statement that the section of the act which sanctioned the wearing of uniforms for ceremonial anniversaries or other occasions has nullified it? The Public Order Act as regards uniforms, which the police have very wisely refused to define, has been carried out to the letter. Mrs. Milner seems unaware that the watch committees control the chief constables and not the chief constables the watch committees, and that no effort is made by the police to forbid the carrying of banners and the like by democratic organizations.

J. B. OLIPHANT

London, England, April 4

Mrs. Milner's Reply

Dear Sirs: My critic is mistaken in his belief that my article was intended as an attack on the Home Office or the London police for partiality toward the fascist forces. Its primary purpose was to point out the danger to democratic countries of such legislation as the Public Order Act and to emphasize its futility as an anti-fascist weapon.

Mr. Oliphant asserts that my article "gave a completely false picture of the situation" as it existed prior to the November elections, and that I "grossly exaggerated" the assaults on Jews in the East End. As a matter of fact, my article mentioned an insignificant number of these occurrences. For a more complete list I refer Mr. Oliphant to the Parliamentary Debate of March 5, 1936, when Herbert Morrison called attention to the extent of the violence against Jews by fascists, in and out of uniform; to the Home Office Debate on July 10, 1936, when R. W. Sorenson cited additional instances of deliberate Black Shirt provocations; to the statements of F. C. Watkins, who emphasized that these terroristic acts were steadily increasing in spite of the government's assurance that the police would take steps to prevent them.

I do not have space for the many cases I could cite in support of my charge that police and police magistrates showed leniency toward fascists and that plain-clothes officers were among the worst offenders, but Mr. Oliphant can obtain a copy of the lengthy report on this subject that was published by the National Council on Civil Liberties. Additional proof may be had from A. M. Wall, secretary of the London Trades Council, who stated in a public address that he was appalled at the glaring instances of police partiality and the leniency shown by magistrates when "fascist ruffians" had been convicted of physical assaults on Jews and damage to their property.

Mr. Oliphant is mistaken in his belief that the decline in the strength of the British Union of Fascists evidenced by the defeat in the November elections was due to the Public Order Act or to police or Home Office influence. A number of factors were responsible, chiefly, perhaps, the dissension in the Mosley ranks and subsequent financial difficulties but largely also the fascist atrocities in Ethiopia and Spain, which aroused public resentment and placed the British fascists on the defensive.

It would have been fairer had Mr. Oliphant quoted the entire sentence in my article relating to police sanction for the wearing of political uniforms on "anniversaries" and "special occasions." This loophole in the act, I pointed out, would, in effect, nullify the ban against political uniforms, for such special occasions are the very times when the fascist uniform would be most provocative. With respect to the watch committees, the point I made in my article was that the element of democratic control which members of Parliament had insisted upon was, in effect, removed when the Home Secretary requested the local authorities to delegate the power to ban processions to the watch committees, whose executive officer is the chief constable.

LUCILLE B. MILNER

New York, April 12

Let the War-Mongers Fight

Dear Sirs: Anent the important questions of peace and war, there are three drastic steps which America, or any nation desirous of preserving peace, must take:

1. Establish a government monopoly of the manufacture of arms, ammunition, and engines of war. This eliminates the desires of private munitions makers to propagandize a nation into war for the sake of profits and creates a situation whereby a nation's actual neutrality may be immediately and accurately determined.

2. Deprive the national leaders of the power to declare war, except in case of invasion of its territory by an armed force, until after a referendum of the citizens.

3. Require that in such a referendum of the citizens each person sign his ballot, the ballots to be preserved and to constitute — in case war is voted — a registration for the draft.

Let those who want war do the fighting.

LEVERNE HAMILTON

Musselshell, Mont., April 19

Life of Lytton Strachey

Dear Sirs: I am engaged upon a biography of Lytton Strachey (1880-1932). If any of your readers have information about, or letters from, the biographer will they please communicate with me.

CYRIL CLEMENS

Webster Groves, Mo., April 4

CONTRIBUTORS

GEORGE SELDES is the author of "Freedom of the Press" and "You Can't Do That."

ELIOT JANEWAY contributes a weekly financial column to the Federated Press.

LUDWIG LORE conducts a column called "Behind the Cables" in the New York *Post*.

KEITH HUTCHISON was formerly on the London staff of the New York *Herald Tribune*.

HUGH H. DARBY is an associate in the Department of Biological Chemistry at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University.

JULIAN BACH, JR. after free-lancing in Europe, became assistant editor of the *Literary Digest* and after that was on the staff of *Ken*.

LOUIS KRONENBERGER is dramatic editor of *Time*.

MINA CURTISS was formerly a member of the English Department of Smith College.

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